ACADEMY CLASSICS

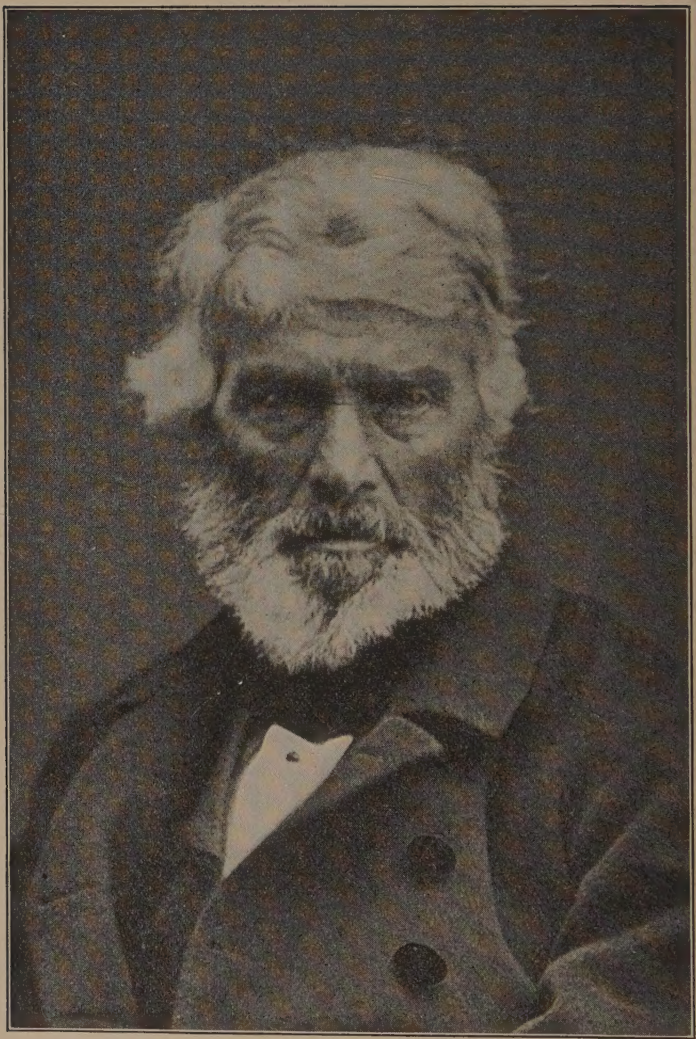
ESSAY ON BURNS

CARLYLE

ALLYN AND BACON

43

Clifford Jennings



THOMAS CARLYLE IN 1876.

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The Academy Classics

CARLYLE

ESSAY ON BURNS

EDITED BY

HENRY W. BOYNTON

WITH INTRODUCTION ON THE LIFE AND WORK OF THOMAS CARLYLE AND OF ROBERT BURNS; NOTES; SELECTIONS FROM THE POEMS OF BURNS; AND A GLOSSARY

ALLYN AND BACON

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PREFACE

THIS edition of Carlyle's famous essay includes, besides full notes on the text, enough material to make clear the source and setting of the essay. The Introduction also gives a short account of the lives of both Burns and Carlyle, with a view especially to bringing out the relations and differences between the two great Scotchmen. The section which touches on the Scottish sources of Burns's inspiration and method ought to prove of value.

In order that high school students may be able to get the gist of Burns, in an introductory sense, from this single volume, his best poems and songs are collected in an Appendix, with the necessary Glossary. Some of this verse needs much less use of the Glossary than the rest; and it is assumed that the teacher will assign poems for reading in accordance with the quality of his classes, and the time at their disposal.

H. W. BOYNTON.

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INTRODUCTION

THOMAS CARLYLE.

LIFE.

THOMAS CARLYLE was born in Ecclefechan, Dumfriesshire, on the fourth of December, 1795. Ecclefechan is only about ten miles from the Border, in a region which has bred the most independent and stubborn race of the lowland Scots. James Carlyle, the father, was a step above the peasant class, being a mason by trade, and later a small farmer; he was the true type of Scottish Calvinist, honest, independent, and stern. Thomas was the first of the nine children of this man and his second wife, Janet Aitken. He was a pugnacious schoolboy, but so eager a student at the local parish school and the neighboring grammar school in Annan, that his father determined to make a minister of him. This was the usual ambition of a clever Scotch boy. James Carlyle belonged to a small sect which had split off from the "Kirk," the Established Church of Scotland. His son accepted the idea of the ministry as the natural goal of scholarship; and a scholar he was bound to be. In November, 1809, he walked to Edinburgh and entered the University. He was not quite fourteen.

At Edinburgh he learned something of the classics, and showed a bent for mathematics. But he got quite as much from his fellow-students, most of them poor and serious-minded like himself, as from his studies; and he seems to have stood high in their esteem. He was never a good "mixer," however; but for a few devoted friendships, his world lay

all his life among books rather than men. The first and warmest of these friendships began when, after two years of teaching in Annan, near his old home, he began another two years' teaching at Kirkcaldy, and there met Edward Irving. Irving also came from Annandale. He was some three years older than Carlyle, a brilliant irregular genius; a personality of force and charm, under whose influence Carlyle long remained. They did not agree in religious matters. Irving was already a licensed preacher, and left Kirkcaldy in 1818 in order to enter the active ministry. Carlyle also was ready to stop teaching; it was not his natural work. But he had by this time given up the idea of the ministry. The rigid creed of the Scottish church was too much for him. He studied law for a time, but did not take to it. He tried a little private teaching, and wrote some articles for the "Edinburgh Encyclopaedia." His religious doubts increased, and for a time he was in a desperate mood, ready to deny everything. He escaped the mood of denial, the "Everlasting No," (as he describes it in "Sartor Resartus") and attained the "Everlasting Yea," the spirit of affirmation — not a creed, but a "working philosophy" of courage and of honest service.

By this time Carlyle had begun other studies. German thought and literature were just beginning to be known in Britain. Carlyle played a leading part in interpreting the German mind and art to the English mind. He revered Goethe, especially as one who had passed through a spiritual struggle like his own, and who had "found himself." During two or three years in which Carlyle held a comfortable berth as a private tutor in London, he worked on a "Life of Schiller," and on his translation of Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister," which Goethe himself was to crown with praise. The post of tutor could not hold one of Carlyle's temper long. He resigned it in 1824. He had no prospects,

was past his first youth, and had begun to suffer from the dyspepsia which was to be his lifelong torment. He tried to make a living as a writer in London. But London's interest in German literature faded out, and Carlyle would not stoop to the hackwork of the fellow-scribblers he despised. He was conscious of unusual powers, but did not know how to apply them and keep alive.

And he was asking a brilliant and sensitive woman to marry him. In this relation, also, Edward Irving was involved. While schoolmastering at Haddington in Scotland, Irving had been interested in a clever and charming pupil, Jane Baillie Welsh. He became engaged later to a Kirkcaldy maiden, but continued to visit Haddington. Jane Welsh was growing up; and it was clear before long that the feeling between them was stronger than friendship. He appealed for release from the Kirkcaldy maiden; but her relatives would not let him off and, faithful to the code of the time, he married her. Meanwhile he had introduced Jane Welsh and Carlyle, and Carlyle, knowing nothing of the blighted affair between the two, became her suitor. She hesitated, for Carlyle was a degree below her socially, and had the strangeness of genius. As daughter of a physician, she had been comfortably reared. After some years of hesitation, she consented to marry him, whenever he could support her decently. Apparently he thought she ought to be willing to "take a chance" as wife of a man of genius who might always be a poor man. They were married, and he failed for a long time to support her decently, nor would he debase his talents to the business of supporting her decently. Under the conditions, her spirit and conduct were admirable. They were always devoted companions; but it was impossible that her high-spirited nature and his grim absorption in one thing — his work — should not have clashed at times. Carlyle lacked the gallantries and delicacies of breeding. Only

after his wife's death does he seem to have suspected what her sensitiveness must have suffered at his rude hands. His remorse and his efforts at atonement are among the most touching matters recorded in literary biography.

They were married in October, 1826, and first settled in Edinburgh. The "Edinburgh Review" was then the leading magazine of its kind in Great Britain. In Edinburgh rather than in London the reputations of authors and critics were made and destroyed. It was the "Edinburgh Review" which tried to dispose of Wordsworth with the famous phrase of contempt, "This will never do." It was the "Edinburgh Review" which earned Byron's furious attack in "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." It was the "Edinburgh Review" which was supposed to have sneered Keats to death. Its influence was conventional and conservative. Lord Jeffrey, its editor, could not be in sympathy with such a genius and point of view as Carlyle's. But he greatly admired Mrs. Carlyle, and chiefly for her sake, it appears, accepted a number of articles from Carlyle at this time. These included essays on "Richter" and "German Literature," and the review of Lockhart's "Life of Robert Burns" which has become known as the "Essay on Burns."

For a time matters went fairly well. Carlyle made a little money, and sent his brother John to study in Germany. But it was not long before he was in straits. He tried and failed to get a professorship at St. Andrews. In 1828 the Carlyles had to retreat to the country. Mrs. Carlyle's mother owned a farm at Craigenputtock which Carlyle's brother Alexander was now trying to farm. Thomas took a cottage nearby, and settled to the writing of "Sartor Resartus." For several years he did no other writing, except a few reviews (among them the review of Croker's edition of "Boswell's Life of Johnson"). There was almost no money coming in, John was failing as a doctor in London, and Alexander as a farmer at

Craigenputtock. Jeffrey was a good friend, lent Carlyle money, and offered to settle an annuity on him. This Carlyle refused to take, having in full that pride of independence of which he accuses, or with which he credits, Burns.

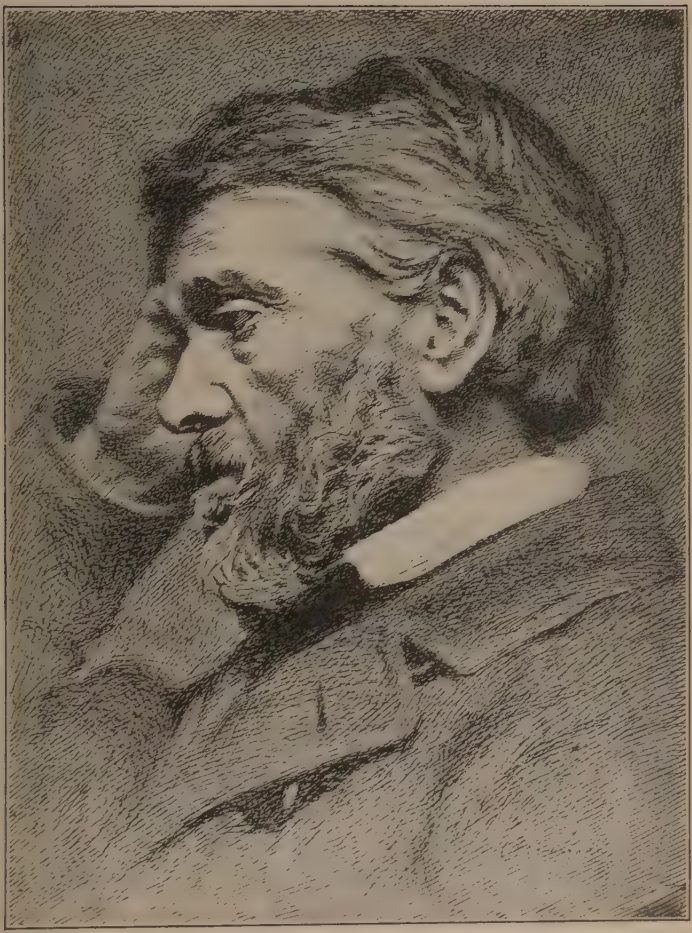
In 1833 the Carlyles gave up the country and returned to Edinburgh. There, luckily, Carlyle stumbled on the materials for "The Diamond Necklace," and was thereby led to the studies from which his great "French Revolution" was to result. "Sartor Resartus" came out, but failed, as a serial in "Fraser's." Its humor was too elaborate and far-fetched to catch an audience for an as yet little-known author. But one great thing had happened to Carlyle at Craigenputtock. That was the visit of the American, Ralph Waldo Emerson. The two men of genius became fast friends; their published correspondence is a treasure of literature. Emerson was among Carlyle's first admirers. He even admired "Sartor Resartus"; and it was he who first got it out in book form, in America. Carlyle was to live to see a large popular edition printed and sold in England. But it was the "French Revolution" which gave him his first hearing at home. In 1834 the Carlyles had turned their backs on Scotland, and taken the house in Chelsea (London) where Carlyle stayed till his death. He began to make important friends, among them John Stuart Mill. Mill encouraged him to begin the "French Revolution." The manuscript of the first volume was burnt by accident while in Mill's hands. Carlyle started all over again, and finished the great book in 1837.

Its publication gave Carlyle his first large recognition. From that point matters began to mend. He became known as a lecturer, and through a series of years gave a number of profitable courses, though "Heroes and Hero-Worship" was the only one to be published. Unhappily, as their fortunes improved, relations between Carlyle and his wife became

badly strained. For some years they lived at cross-purposes, the fault being chiefly Carlyle's. Mrs. Carlyle was a sensitive and high-strung woman, whose devotion Carlyle, with more than a trace of the Scotch peasant in his manner and point of view, failed to recognize as generously as he should have. After her death her journals revealed to him something of what she had suffered. His last years were a long penance. His last works, the "Reminiscences" and the "Letters and Memorials" were largely tributes to her memory. In 1865, the year before her death, he had finished his great work on "Frederick the Great," and had been made Rector of the University of Edinburgh. His health was broken, his work was virtually done. He passed the remainder of his years in retirement, though not deserted by his friends; and died on the fourth of February, 1881. He might have been buried in Westminster Abbey, among the greatest of England's dead, but his wish was to be put beside his parents in the little graveyard at Ecclefechan. He left his books to Harvard College.

WORK.

Carlyle was a thinker at odds with his generation. He was a prophet with the soul of an idealist and the eye of a pessimist. He was a dreamer who could not make his dreams come true. The stern inheritance of his Calvinistic fathers and his physical ill-health united to give him a gloomy view of man as he is. He hated and endlessly denounced the shams, the cant, the materialism, and the social tyranny of his day. He was the champion of his own class. He stood for the people against the hereditary ruling class. This could be understood. But he was, on the other hand, an ardent "hero-worshipper." He believed that the world has always owed its salvation in crises, and its progress as a whole, to its few great men. One by one, he held, they have repre-



THOMAS CARLYLE IN HIS PRIME.

sented divinity and authority among men, whether they might be poets or statesmen or conquerors or great religious leaders. Therefore he was in the position of preaching authority while denouncing tyranny. He was accused of identifying might and right because he believed in a strong hand at the helm of government. In a way he was a radical; but the sort of radical who demands not only revolution but constructive reform. Here he parted company with John Stuart Mill and other radicals of his time (as of our time) who seemed to believe that if the tearing down of existing institutions could only be done thoroughly, the rebuilding would somehow take care of itself. Carlyle's mysticism was less visionary than the woolgathering of these people. He hated tyranny, but he hated anarchy more; just as he hated the petrified forms of religion, but hated irreligion more.

Carlyle's mysticism had much in common with the mysticism, or transcendentalism, of the Germans he is always quoting, and of his friend and contemporary Emerson. He believed profoundly in the inner meaning of common things, as well as in a great "Secret of the Universe" which it is the province of genius to interpret to mankind. Again and again he enforces this truth in the course of his essays and biographies and lectures. This is what he means by a "Hero," — an interpreter. For this quality he "worships" figures so different as Samuel Johnson and Shakespeare, Luther and Rousseau, Cromwell and Burns. His creed is summed up as well as anywhere in a passage of "The Hero as Man of Letters" ("Heroes and Hero-Worship"): "Literature, so far as it is Literature, is an 'apocalypse of Nature,' a revealing of the 'open secret.' It may well enough be named, in Fichte's style, a 'continuous revelation' of the Godlike in the Terrestrial and Common. The Godlike does ever, in very truth, endure there; is brought out, now in this dialect, now in

that, with various degrees of clearness; all true gifted Singers and Speakers are, consciously or unconsciously, doing so. The dark stormful indignation of a Byron, so wayward and perverse, may have touches of it; nay, the withered mockery of a French skeptic, — his mockery of the False, a love and worship of the True. How much more the sphere-harmony of a Shakespeare, of a Goethe; the cathedral-music of a Milton! They are something, too, those humble genuine lark-notes of a Burns, — a skylark, starting from the humble furrow, far overhead in the blue depths, and singing so genuinely to us there! For all true singing is of the nature of worship; as indeed all true *working* may be said to be, — whereof such *singing* is but the record, and fit melodious representation, to us."

Carlyle's style was his own, a product partly of his rude and vivid northern fancy, and partly of his German studies. In his constant use of capitals, in his fondness for long compounds and for inversions of syntax, the German influence shows itself. Matthew Arnold warned his generation against the spread of "Carlylese"; and indeed there could be no worse style to imitate. It has, on the other hand, strong individual merits. It is vivid, picturesque, forceful. If sometimes fantastic, it is often deeply imaginative. And it has a salt and pungent savor without which the nineteenth century literature of England would be a different dish.

As a summary estimate of Carlyle's quality and influence, we cannot do better than to quote from the careful opinion of James Russell Lowell:

"The great merit of the essays lay in a criticism based on wide and various study, which, careless of tradition, applied its standard to the real and not the contemporary worth of the literary or other performance to be judged, and in an unerring eye for that fleeting expression of the moral features of character, a perception of which alone makes the drawing of a coherent likeness possible. Their

defect was a tendency, gaining strength with years, to confound the moral with the æsthetic standard, and to make the value of an author's work dependent on the general force of his nature rather than on its special fitness for a given task. But, with all deductions, he remains the profoundest critic and the most dramatic imagination of modern times. His manner is not so well suited to the historian as to the essayist. He is always great in single figures and striking episodes, but there is neither gradation nor continuity. He sees history, as it were, by flashes of lighting. He makes us acquainted with the isolated spot where we happen to be when the flash comes, as if by actual eyesight, but there is no possibility of a comprehensive view. No other writer compares with him for vividness. With the gift of song, Carlyle would have been the greatest of epic poets since Homer. . . .

"Though not the safest of guides in politics or practical philosophy, his value as an inspirer and awakener cannot be overestimated. It is a power which belongs only to the highest order of minds, for it is none but a divine fire that can so kindle and irradiate. The debt due him from those who listened to the teachings of his prime for revealing to them what sublime reserves of power even the humblest may find in manliness, sincerity, and self-reliance, can be paid with nothing short of reverential gratitude. As a purifier of the sources whence our intellectual inspiration is drawn, his influence has been second only to that of Wordsworth, if even to his."

ROBERT BURNS.

LIFE.

Robert Burns was born on January 25, 1759. His father, William Burnes or Burness, was socially a degree below Carlyle's father; not a farmer, but a "crofter"; that is, he rented a few acres on the banks of Doon, a mile or two from the town of Ayr. There in a two-roomed thatched cottage, the poet was born, the first of seven children. The father was (like Carlyle's father) a man of strong character and intelligence, and ambitious for his children. Robert Burns went to the best schools that could be reached and afforded, but these could not take him far; and by his tenth year his regular schooling was over. Luckily there were a few good books in the home: Pope's "Iliad," "The Spectator," the poems of Ramsay and Fergusson, "Ossian," a collection of English songs, and above all, the Bible. Burns was by no means, as Carlyle alleges, "without instruction, without model."

And from his mother and an old woman who lived in the family he learned great store of country legends and folk-songs of the Border region. At fifteen he wrote his first song, ("to the tune of her favorite reel") in honor of "Handsome Nell," a harvest-companion. By this time his father had taken a larger farm at Mount Oliphant; and when Burns was about twenty, settled at Lochlea in Tarbolton. The Burns family were hard-working and honest, but never got much above poverty. Robert grew up to take, as eldest son, more than his full share of the farm work. But he was not satisfied with the hard routine of family life. His nature demanded gayety. At sixteen he learned to dance,

Burns's Cottage, Alloway, Ayr.

against the wishes of his pious parents; and he began to be always in love, and, as he said later, was "in the secret of half the loves of the parish." He was otherwise experimenting with life, — studied surveying, helped found a debating society, the "Bachelors' Club," and so on. From the first, his verse-making grew out of his human experiences and contacts, as well as out of his knowledge of the poetry of the past.

In 1782, at twenty-three, he went to the town of Irvine and tried his hand at the trade of flax-dressing. The experiment failed, partly through ill-luck, partly through his own fault. It was at Irvine that he had his first real experience of wild company, and fell into habits of dissipation: and what was worse, lost his respect for the principles of personal morality in which he had been brought up.

His failure to get on in the world sobered him somewhat, and he returned to Lochlea. Matters there were in desperate case. Burns the elder was ill and hopelessly in debt. Death released him in 1784. Robert and his brother Gilbert contrived to save enough from the wreck of the family fortunes to rent the small farm of Mossgiel. Here they found the familiar hard toil and small returns. But at this time Burns met Jean Armour, who afterwards became his wife; and during the next few years he produced much of his best poetry. However, it was a kind of accident that brought him his first recognition as a poet beyond the praises of his rustic neighbors. Two years of crop failure at Mossgiel, and various private troubles, so discouraged him that he determined to leave Scotland. He had the promise of a clerical post in Jamaica. To get passage money, he collected some of his poems and had them printed. He was about to take passage for Jamaica when news came that his book was rousing enthusiasm in Edinburgh and that there was demand for more of his work.

Then followed a few untroubled years. He went to Edinburgh, and "carried all classes by storm with the brilliance and force of his personality." In 1787 a second and much larger edition of his poems came out, and brought him £500, the equivalent of say $4000 to-day. Nearly half of this he gave to his brother Gilbert, to help him hold Mossgiel. With the rest he bought a farm in Dumfriesshire, — Ellisland, another disastrous bargain for the farmer-poet. To make ends meet, and partly because it was a job which brought him into varied contact with men, he got a position as a "gauger," an officer of the "excise," or, as we say, a revenue officer. Ellisland having proved a complete failure, he moved with his wife and family to the town of Dumfries (1791), where he lived till his death. The first flush of his popularity as a poet waned, and he had no notion of deliberately writing poems for money. The excise business became increasingly distasteful, he fell a prey to a crew of "toping worshippers"; and the end was not far off. Poverty and drink and the broken spirits of one who has seen the heights and failed to reach them, hastened his death. On July 21, 1796, at the age of thirty-seven, his uneasy years came to an end.

WORK.

Burns's poetry is the product of two distinct and often warring influences. There was the eighteenth century English influence, out of books; with its standards of conventional elegance, of "polite" substance and formal style. And there was the influence of the broad and vigorous Scotch tongue and folk-literature to which he was bred. The first influence produced his prose and a good deal of verse which we value largely because it is his. The second influence produced all the best of his poems and songs and set him among the immortals.

Let us understand that the lowland Scotch tongue was and is something more than a vulgar and shifting dialect. It is a composite tongue; but hardly more so than modern English. It derives from a Northumbrian form of Old English, an Anglian tongue which was given a strong Scandinavian flavor by the Danish and Norse settlers in Northumbria. It retained also more than a tincture of the Gaelic of the older inhabitants of the Border region, who were driven North, or remained to be assimilated in blood and speech by the lowland race. In the twelfth century and later the lowland speech was further enlarged and colored by many French words and idioms which came partly from the Norman conquerors of England, and partly from France during the long period when the French and the Scotch were allied against England. There were of course local dialects of the Scotch as there were and are of the English. Words and variants in form are met in Burns's poetry which belonged peculiarly to his own Ayrshire. But one who can read Burns will have little difficulty in reading the broad Scotch passages in later writers, from Scott to Barrie.

Nor was this tongue, in Burns's time, without its own literary traditions. Half a century earlier, Allan Ramsay had not only written poems of his own in the vernacular, but had collected and published a large number of ancient Scottish poems and songs which had hitherto existed only in manuscript or on the tongues of the people. In his own verse he used, like Burns, the broad Scotch in merry and spontaneous expression, and a rather stilted English when he wished to be serious. Robert Fergusson was born only nine years before Burns, but lived out his brief and tragic career while Burns was still a schoolboy. It was only in the last of his few years that he was beginning to realize that his best work lay in the use of the humble but genuine Scotch of his birth rather than in the highflown English of the literary England

of that period. He was feeble in body and in will. He lived loosely and died in a madhouse. But he was a man of genius, to whom Burns paid full tribute. What Burns owed him is admirably summed up by J. G. Dow, in the Introduction to his "Selections from the Poems of Robert Burns":

"Inheriting the Scotch tradition which Ramsay had once more popularized, and the public which Ramsay had awakened, Fergusson likewise inherited the elder poet's 'spunk o' glee,' the broad fun and sly satire which were so acceptable to his audience, and that love of nature which brings a waft of country air into his city poems. His genius, singularly void of passion, and immature in all except a precocious tone of reflective wisdom, is that of the townsman born and bred who loves and misses the country. His subjects are drawn mainly from city and suburban life; he paints the humors of Auld Reekie and hits off her characters with deft good nature, banters the lords and advocates of the Session, satirically moralizes on the respectability of the citizen's broadcloth, preaches to his fellow clubmen, with mock gravity, on the virtues of cold water, wakens the ghosts that haunt the Canongate, and collogues with plainstanes and causey on the High Street. But he gladly listens to the song of the gowdspink, his eye catches the butterfly in the thoroughfare, and he passes in fancy to the rustic joys of the farmer's ingle. His style of treatment is humorous, pathetic, and moralistic. In these and other respects his relation to Burns is so close that it would almost seem as if his entire equipment, his humor, satire, and sagacity, his sympathy with nature and his warm humanity, his vivid sight of his object, even his diction and versification, had been transplanted into the richer soil of Burns's mind, and flourished there anew."

As Carlyle says, it is in his songs that Burns (like Fergusson) is greatest. Their origin is full of interest; and the student may well read the parts of Professor Dow's "Introduction" from which we have just quoted, on "Scottish Song and Music Before Burns," and "Burns's Work in Its Relation to the Past." Very briefly: Scotch song grew out of Scotch music. The air of the lowlands was full of old melodies, usually known by the name of some song which had at some

time been sung to the given tune; but constantly changing as they passed from one ear, and one generation, to another. For instance, there is the tune (or theme) known as "Lady Cassilis' Lilt." "In this old Melody," says Dow, "we can see the source of the plaintive strains of 'The Bonie House of Airlie,' and 'A Wee Bird Cam to Our Ha' Door'; a different modulation of the same air gives us 'Hey Tutti Taitie,' whose tenderness appears in 'The Land of the Leal'; and with only a slight change of accent this pathos is transformed into the martial bravery of 'Scots Wha Hae.'" Whether Burns was a bad singer or not (as his old schoolmaster said he was), his inward ear was full of these melodies. One of them would get to ringing in his head, and gradually words would form to match the tune, according to his mood of the hour. In this way nearly all his songs came into being. In many instances not only the tune, but some rude version of the words lay ready to his hand. His task (like Shakespeare's) was to use and perfect the materials of his age, rather than to invent those materials. For the rest, Robert Louis Stevenson has said all that need be said here of Burns the Maker:

"To homely subjects Burns communicated the rich commentary of his nature; they were all steeped in Burns; and they interest us not in themselves, but because they have been passed through the spirit of so genuine and vigorous a man."

A. T. Quiller-Couch has a suggestive comment on the fact that Robert Burns, not Walter Scott or any other, is the idol of all Scotchmen the world over. It is, he surmises, "the *homeliness* of Burns that appeals to them as a wandering race. It is because in farthest exile a line of Burns takes their hearts straight back to Scotland."

CARLYLE'S SUMMARY OF THE ESSAY ON BURNS.

(*The headings are the present editor's.*)

Introduction. BURNS AND HIS BIOGRAPHERS. Pages 1–5.

Our grand maxim of supply and demand. Living misery and posthumous glory. The character of Burns a theme that cannot easily become exhausted. His Biographers. Perfection in Biography.

Body. I. SUMMING-UP OF BURNS'S CHARACTER AND WORK. Pages 5–10.

Burns one of the most considerable British men of the eighteenth century: an age the most prosaic Britain had yet seen. His hard and most disadvantageous conditions. Not merely as a Poet, but as a Man, that he chiefly interests and affects us. His life a deeper tragedy than any brawling Napoleon's. His heart, erring and at length broken, full of inborn riches, of love to all living and lifeless things. The Peasant Poet bears himself among the low, with whom his lot is cast, like a King in exile.

II. BURNS AS POET.

(1) *Sincerity.* Pages 10–18.

His Writings but a poor mutilated fraction of what was in him, yet of a quality enduring as the English tongue. He wrote, not from hearsay, but from sight and actual experience. This, easy as it looks, the fundamental difficulty which all poets have to strive with. Byron, heartily as he detested insincerity, far enough from faultless. No poet of Burns's susceptibility from first to last so totally free from affectation. Some of his Letters, however, by no means deserve this praise. His singular power of making all subjects, even the most homely, interesting. Wherever there is a sky above him, and a world around him, the poet is in his place. Every genius an impossibility till he appears.

(2) *Insight and Feeling.* Pages 18–27.

Burns's rugged earnest truth, yet tenderness and sweet native grace. His clear, graphic 'descriptive touches' and piercing emphasis of thought. Professor Stewart's testimony to Burns's intellectual vigour. A deeper insight than any 'doctrine of association.' In the Poetry of Burns keenness of insight keeps pace with keenness of feeling. Loving Indignation and *good* Hatred: *Scots Wha Hae; Macpherson's Farewell:* Sunny buoyant floods of Humour.

(3) *The Poet at Worst and Best.* Pages 27–35.

Imperfections of Burns's poetry: *Tam o' Shanter,* not a true poem so much as a piece of sparkling rhetoric; The *Jolly Beggars,* the most complete and perfect as a poetical composition. His Songs the most truly inspired and most deeply felt of all his poems. His influence on the hearts and literature of his country: Literary patriotism.

III. Burns as Man.

(1) *Unfavorable Conditions of His Youth.* Pages 35–41.

Burns's acted Works even more interesting than his written ones; and these too, alas, but a fragment. His passionate youth never passed into clear and steadfast manhood. The only true happiness of a man: Often it is the greatest minds that are latest in obtaining it: Burns and Byron. Burns's hard-worked, yet happy boyhood: His estimable parents. Early dissipations. In Necessity and Obedience a man should find his highest Freedom.

(2) *Troubles of His Later Years.* Pages 41–47.

Religious quarrels and scepticisms. Faithlessness: Exile and blackest desperation. Invited to Edinburgh: A Napoleon among the crowned sovereigns of Literature. Sir Walter Scott's reminiscence of an interview with Burns. Burns's calm, manly bearing amongst the Edinburgh aristocracy. His bitter feeling of his own indigence. By the great he is treated in the customary fashion; and each party goes his several way.

(3) *What Remedy?* Pages 47–53.

What Burns was next to do, or to avoid: His Excise-and-Farm scheme not an unreasonable one: No failure of external means, but

of internal, that overtook Burns. Good beginnings. Patrons of genius and picturesque tourists: Their moral rottenness, by which he became infected, gradually eats out the heart of his life. Meteors of French Politics rise before him, but they are not *his* stars. Calumny is busy with him. The little great-folk of Dumfries: Burns's desolation. In his destitution and degradation one act of self-devotedness still open to him: Not as a hired soldier, but as a patriot, would he strive for the glory of his country. The crisis of his life: Death.

(4) *No Remedy — for a Burns.* Pages 53–57.

Little effectual help could perhaps have been rendered to Burns: Patronage twice cursed: Many a poet has been poorer, none prouder. And yet much might have been done to have made his humble atmosphere more genial. Little Babylons and Babylonians: Let us go and *do otherwise.* The market-price of Wisdom. Not in the power of *any* mere external circumstances to ruin the mind of a man. The errors of Burns to be mourned over, rather than blamed. The great want of his life was the great want of his age, a true faith in Religion and a singleness and unselfishness of aim.

Conclusion. The Tragedy of Genius. Pages 57–65.

Poetry, as Burns could and ought to have followed it, is but another form of Wisdom, of Religion. For his culture as a Poet, poverty and much suffering for a season were absolutely advantageous. To divide his hours between poetry and rich men's banquets an ill-starred attempt. Byron, rich in worldly means and honours, no whit happier than Burns in his poverty and worldly degradation: They had a message from on High to deliver, which could leave them no rest while it remained unaccomplished. Death and the rest of the grave: A stern moral, *twice* told us in our own time. The world habitually unjust in its judgments of such men. With men of right feeling anywhere, there will be no need to plead for Burns: In pitying admiration he lies enshrined in all our hearts.

ROBERT BURNS.

CARLYLE'S ESSAY ON BURNS.

[*Edinburgh Review, No. 96. 1828.*]

In the modern arrangements of society, it is no uncommon thing that a man of genius must, like Butler, 'ask for bread and receive a stone;' for, in spite of our grand maxim of supply and demand, it is by no means the highest excellence that men are most forward to recognize. The inventor of a spinning-jenny is pretty sure of his reward in his own day; but the writer of a true poem, like the apostle of a true religion, is nearly as sure of the contrary. We do not know whether it is not an aggravation of the injustice, that there is generally a posthumous retribution. Robert Burns, in the course of Nature, might yet have been living; but his short life was spent in toil and penury; and he died, in the prime of his manhood, miserable and neglected: and yet already a brave mausoleum shines over his dust, and more than one splendid monument has been reared in other places to his fame; the street where he languished in poverty is called by his name; the highest personages in our literature have been proud to appear as his commentators and admirers; and here is the *sixth* narrative of his *Life* that has been given to the world!

Mr. Lockhart thinks it necessary to apologize for this new attempt on such a subject: but his readers, we believe, will readily acquit him; or, at worst, will censure only

the performance of his task, not the choice of it. The character of Burns, indeed, is a theme that cannot easily become either trite or exhausted; and will probably gain rather than lose in its dimensions by the distance to which it is removed by Time. No man, it has been said, is a hero to his valet; and this is probably true; but the fault is at least as likely to be the valet's as the hero's. For it is certain that to the vulgar eye few things are wonderful that are not distant. It is difficult for men to believe that the man, the mere man whom they see, nay, perhaps painfully feel, toiling at their side through the poor jostlings of existence, can be made of finer clay than themselves. Suppose that some dining acquaintance of Sir Thomas Lucy's, and neighbor of John a Combe's, had snatched an hour or two from the preservation of his game, and written us a Life of Shakspeare! What dissertations should we not have had, — not on *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*, but on the wool-trade, and deer-stealing, and the libel and vagrant laws; and how the Poacher became a Player; and how Sir Thomas and Mr. John had Christian bowels, and did not push him to extremities! In like manner, we believe, with respect to Burns, that till the companions of his pilgrimage, the Honorable Excise Commissioners, and the Gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt, and the Dumfries Aristocracy, and all the Squires and Earls, equally with the Ayr Writers, and the New and Old Light Clergy, whom he had to do with, shall have become invisible in the darkness of the Past, or visible only by light borrowed from *his* juxtaposition, it will be difficult to measure him by any true standard, or to estimate what he really was and did, in the eighteenth century, for his country and the world. It will be difficult, we say; but still a fair problem for literary historians; and repeated attempts will give us repeated approximations.

His former Biographers have done something, no doubt,

but by no means a great deal, to assist us. Dr. Currie and Mr. Walker, the principal of these writers, have both, we think, mistaken one essentially important thing: Their own and the world's true relation to their author, and the style in which it became such men to think and to speak of such a man. Dr. Currie loved the poet truly; more perhaps than he avowed to his readers, or even to himself; yet he everywhere introduces him with a certain patronizing, apologetic air; as if the polite public might think it strange and half unwarrantable that he, a man of science, a scholar and gentleman, should do such honor to a rustic. In all this, however, we readily admit that his fault was not want of love, but weakness of faith; and regret that the first and kindest of all our poet's biographers should not have seen farther, or believed more boldly what he saw. Mr. Walker offends more deeply in the same kind: and both err alike in presenting us with a detached catalogue of his several supposed attributes, virtues and vices, instead of a delineation of the resulting character as a living unity. This, however, is not painting a portrait; but gauging the length and breadth of the several features, and jotting down their dimensions in arithmetical ciphers. Nay, it is not so much as that: for we are yet to learn by what arts or instruments the mind *could* be so measured and gauged.

Mr. Lockhart, we are happy to say, has avoided both these errors. He uniformly treats Burns as the high and remarkable man the public voice has now pronounced him to be: and in delineating him, he has avoided the method of separate generalities, and rather sought for characteristic incidents, habits, actions, sayings; in a word, for aspects which exhibit the whole man, as he looked and lived among his fellows. The book accordingly, with all its deficiencies, gives more insight, we think, into the true character of Burns, than any prior biography: though, being written on

the very popular and condensed scheme of an article for *Constable's Miscellany,* it has less depth than we could have wished and expected from a writer of such power; and contains rather more, and more multifarious quotations than belong of right to an original production. Indeed, Mr. Lockhart's own writing is generally so good, so clear, direct, and nervous, that we seldom wish to see it making place for another man's. However, the spirit of the work is throughout candid, tolerant, and anxiously conciliating; compliments and praises are liberally distributed, on all hands, to great and small; and, as Mr. Morris Birkbeck observes of the society in the backwoods of America, 'the courtesies of polite life are never lost sight of for a moment.' But there are better things than these in the volume; and we can safely testify, not only that it is easily and pleasantly read a first time, but may even be without difficulty read again.

Nevertheless, we are far from thinking that the problem of Burns's Biography has yet been adequately solved. We do not allude so much to deficiency of facts or documents, — though of these we are still every day receiving some fresh accession, — as to the limited and imperfect application of them to the great end of Biography. Our notions upon this subject may perhaps appear extravagant; but if an individual is really of consequence enough to have his life and character recorded for public remembrance, we have always been of opinion that the public ought to be made acquainted with all the inward springs and relations of his character. How did the world and man's life, from his particular position, represent themselves to his mind? How did coexisting circumstances modify him from without; how did he modify these from within? With what endeavors and what efficacy rule over them; with what resistance and what suffering sink under them? In one word, what and how produced was the effect of society on him; what and how produced was his effect on society?

He who should answer these questions, in regard to any individual, would, as we believe, furnish a model of perfection in Biography. Few individuals, indeed, can deserve such a study; and many *lives* will be written, and, for the gratification of innocent curiosity, ought to be written, and read and forgotten, which are not in this sense *biographies*. But Burns, if we mistake not, is one of these few individuals; and such a study, at least with such a result, he has not yet obtained. Our own contributions to it, we are aware, can be but scanty and feeble; but we offer them with good-will, and trust they may meet with acceptance from those they are intended for.

Burns first came upon the world as a prodigy; and was, in that character, entertained by it, in the usual fashion, with loud, vague, tumultuous wonder, speedily subsiding into censure and neglect; till his early and most mournful death again awakened an enthusiasm for him, which, especially as there was now nothing to be done, and much to be spoken, has prolonged itself even to our own time. It is true, the 'nine days' have long since elapsed; and the very continuance of this clamor proves that Burns was no vulgar wonder. Accordingly, even in sober judgments, where, as years passed by, he has come to rest more and more exclusively on his own intrinsic merits, and may now be well-nigh shorn of that casual radiance, he appears not only as a true British poet, but as one of the most considerable British men of the eighteenth century. Let it not be objected that he did little. He did much, if we consider where and how. If the work performed was small, we must remember that he had his very materials to discover; for the metal he worked in lay hid under the desert, where no eye but his had guessed its existence; and we may almost say that with his own hand he had to construct the tools for fashioning it. For he found himself in deepest obscurity, without help,

without instruction, without model; or with models only of the meanest sort. An educated man stands, as it were, in the midst of a boundless arsenal and magazine, filled with all the weapons and engines which man's skill has been able to devise from the earliest time; and he works, accordingly, with a strength borrowed from all past ages. How different is *his* state who stands on the outside of that storehouse, and feels that its gates must be stormed, or remain forever shut against him! His means are the commonest and rudest; the mere work done is no measure of his strength. A dwarf behind his steam-engine may remove mountains; but no dwarf will hew them down with a pickaxe: and he must be a Titan that hurls them abroad with his arms.

It is in this last shape that Burns presents himself. Born in an age the most prosaic Britain had yet seen, and in a condition the most disadvantageous, where his mind, if it accomplished aught, must accomplish it under the pressure of continual bodily toil, nay, of penury and desponding apprehension of the worst evils, and with no furtherance but such knowledge as dwells in a poor man's hut, and the rhymes of a Ferguson or Ramsay for his standard of beauty, he sinks not under all these impediments: through the fogs and darkness of that obscure region, his lynx eye discerns the true relations of the world and human life; he grows into intellectual strength, and trains himself into intellectual expertness. Impelled by the expansive movement of his own irrepressible soul, he struggles forward into the general view; and with haughty modesty lays down before us, as the fruit of his labor, a gift which Time has now pronounced imperishable. Add to all this, that his darksome drudging childhood and youth was by far the kindliest era of his whole life; and that he died in his thirty-seventh year: and then ask, If it be strange that his poems are imperfect, and of small extent, or that his genius attained no mastery in its art? Alas, his Sun shone as through a tropi-

cal tornado; and the pale Shadow of Death eclipsed it at noon! Shrouded in such baleful vapors, the genius of Burns was never seen in clear azure splendor, enlightening the world: but some beams from it did, by fits, pierce through; and it tinted those clouds with rainbow and orient colors, into a glory and stern grandeur, which men silently gazed on with wonder and tears!

We are anxious not to exaggerate; for it is exposition rather than admiration that our readers require of us here; and yet to avoid some tendency to that side is no easy matter. We love Burns, and we pity him; and love and pity are prone to magnify. Criticism, it is sometimes thought, should be a cold business; we are not so sure of this; but, at all events, our concern with Burns is not exclusively that of critics. True and genial as his poetry must appear, it is not chiefly as a poet, but as a man, that he interests and affects us. He was often advised to write a tragedy: time and means were not lent him for this; but through life he enacted a tragedy, and one of the deepest. We question whether the world has since witnessed so utterly sad a scene; whether Napoleon himself, left to brawl with Sir Hudson Lowe, and perish on his rock, 'amid the melancholy main,' presented to the reflecting mind such a 'spectacle of pity and fear' as did this intrinsically nobler, gentler, and perhaps greater soul, wasting itself away in a hopeless struggle with base entanglements, which coiled closer and closer round him, till only death opened him an outlet. Conquerors are a class of men with whom, for most part, the world could well dispense; nor can the hard intellect, the unsympathizing loftiness, and high but selfish enthusiasm of such persons inspire us in general with any affection; at best it may excite amazement; and their fall, like that of a pyramid, will be beheld with a certain sadness and awe. But a true Poet, a man in whose heart resides some effluence of Wisdom, some tone of the 'Eternal Mel-

odies,' is the most precious gift that can be bestowed on a generation: we see in him a freer, purer development of whatever is noblest in ourselves; his life is a rich lesson to us; and we mourn his death as that of a benefactor who loved and taught us.

Such a gift had Nature, in her bounty, bestowed on us in Robert Burns; but with queenlike indifference she cast it from her hand, like a thing of no moment; and it was defaced and torn asunder, as an idle bauble, before we recognized it. To the ill-starred Burns was given the power of making man's life more venerable, but that of wisely guiding his own life was not given. Destiny, — for so in our ignorance we must speak, — his faults, the faults of others, proved too hard for him; and that spirit which might have soared could it but have walked, soon sank to the dust, its glorious faculties trodden under foot in the blossom; and died, we may almost say, without ever having lived. And so kind and warm a soul; so full of inborn riches, of love to all living and lifeless things! How his heart flows out in sympathy over universal Nature; and in her bleakest provinces discerns a beauty and a meaning! The 'Daisy' falls not unheeded under his ploughshare; nor the ruined nest of that 'wee, cowering, timorous beastie,' cast forth, after all its provident pains, to 'thole the sleety dribble and cranreuch cauld.' The 'hoar visage' of Winter delights him; he dwells with a sad and oft-returning fondness in these scenes of solemn desolation; but the voice of the tempest becomes an anthem to his ears; he loves to walk in the sounding woods, for 'it raises his thoughts to *Him that walketh on the wings of the wind.*' A true Poet-soul, for it needs but to be struck, and the sound it yields will be music! But observe him chiefly as he mingles with his brother men. What warm, all-comprehending fellow-feeling; what trustful, boundless love; what generous exaggeration of the object loved! His rustic friend, his nut-brown

maiden, are no longer mean and homely, but a hero and a queen, whom he prizes as the paragons of Earth. The rough scenes of Scottish life, not seen by him in any Arcadian illusion, but in the rude contradiction, in the smoke and soil of a too harsh reality, are still lovely to him: Poverty is indeed his companion, but Love also, and Courage; the simple feelings, the worth, the nobleness, that dwell under the straw roof, are dear and venerable to his heart: and thus over the lowest provinces of man's existence he pours the glory of his own soul; and they rise, in shadow and sunshine, softened and brightened into a beauty which other eyes discern not in the highest. He has a just self-consciousness, which too often degenerates into pride; yet it is a noble pride, for defence, not for offence; no cold suspicious feeling, but a frank and social one. The Peasant Poet bears himself, we might say, like a King in exile: he is cast among the low, and feels himself equal to the highest; yet he claims no rank, that none may be disputed to him. The forward he can repel, the supercilious he can subdue; pretensions of wealth or ancestry are of no avail with him; there is a fire in that dark eye, under which the 'insolence of condescension' cannot thrive. In his abasement, in his extreme need, he forgets not for a moment the majesty of Poetry and Manhood. And yet, far as he feels himself above common men, he wanders not apart from them, but mixes warmly in their interests; nay, throws himself into their arms, and, as it were, entreats them to love him. It is moving to see how, in his darkest despondency, this proud being still seeks relief from friendship; unbosoms himself, often to the unworthy; and, amid tears, strains to his glowing heart a heart that knows only the name of friendship. And yet he was 'quick to learn;' a man of keen vision, before whom common disguises afforded no concealment. His understanding saw through the hollowness even of accomplished deceivers; but there was a

generous credulity in his heart. And so did our Peasant show himself among us; 'a soul like an Æolian harp, in whose strings the vulgar wind, as it passed through them, changed itself into articulate melody.' And this was he for whom the world found no fitter business than quarreling with smugglers and vintners, computing excise-dues upon tallow, and gauging ale-barrels! In such toils was that mighty Spirit sorrowfully wasted: and a hundred years may pass on, before another such is given us to waste.

All that remains of Burns, the Writings he has left, seem to us, as we hinted above, no more than a poor mutilated fraction of what was in him; brief, broken glimpses of a genius that could never show itself complete; that wanted all things for completeness: culture, leisure, true effort, nay, even length of life. His poems are, with scarcely any exception, mere occasional effusions; poured forth with little meditation; expressing, by such means as offered, the passion, opinion, or humor of the hour. Never in one instance was it permitted him to grapple with any subject with the full collection of his strength, to fuse and mould it in the concentrated fire of his genius. To try by the strict rules of Art such imperfect fragments, would be at once unprofitable and unfair. Nevertheless, there is something in these poems, marred and defective as they are, which forbids the most fastidious student of poetry to pass them by. Some sort of enduring quality they must have: for after fifty years of the wildest vicissitudes in poetic taste, they still continue to be read; nay, are read more and more eagerly, more and more extensively; and this not only by literary virtuosos, and that class upon whom transitory causes operate most strongly, but by all classes, down to the most hard, unlettered, and truly natural class, who read little, and especially no poetry, except because they find pleasure in it. The grounds of so singular and wide a popularity, which extends,

in a literal sense, from the palace to the hut, and over all regions where the English tongue is spoken, are well worth inquiring into. After every just deduction, it seems to imply some rare excellence in these works. What is that excellence?

To answer this question will not lead us far. The excellence of Burns is, indeed, among the rarest, whether in poetry or prose; but, at the same time, it is plain and easily recognized: his *Sincerity*, his indisputable air of Truth. Here are no fabulous woes or joys; no hollow fantastic sentimentalities; no wiredrawn refinings, either in thought or feeling: the passion that is traced before us has glowed in a living heart; the opinion he utters has risen in his own understanding, and been a light to his own steps. He does not write from hearsay, but from sight and experience; it is the scenes that he has lived and labored amidst, that he describes: those scenes, rude and humble as they are, have kindled beautiful emotions in his soul, noble thoughts, and definite resolves; and he speaks forth what is in him, not from any outward call of vanity or interest, but because his heart is too full to be silent. He speaks it with such melody and modulation as he can; 'in homely rustic jingle;' but it is his own, and genuine. This is the grand secret for finding readers and retaining them: let him who would move and convince others, be first moved and convinced himself. Horace's rule, *Si vis me flere*, is applicable in a wider sense than the literal one. To every poet, to every writer, we might say: Be true, if you would be believed. Let a man but speak forth with genuine earnestness the thought, the emotion, the actual condition of his own heart; and other men, so strangely are we all knit together by the tie of sympathy, must and will give heed to him. In culture, in extent of view, we may stand above the speaker, or below him; but in either case, his words, if they are earnest and sincere, will find some response within us; for in spite

of all casual varieties in outward rank or inward, as face answers to face, so does the heart of man to man.

This may appear a very simple principle, and one which Burns had little merit in discovering. True, the discovery is easy enough: but the practical appliance is not easy; is indeed the fundamental difficulty which all poets have to strive with, and which scarcely one in the hundred ever fairly surmounts. A head too dull to discriminate the true from the false; a heart too dull to love the one at all risks, and to hate the other in spite of all temptations, are alike fatal to a writer. With either, or, as more commonly happens, with both of these deficiencies, combine a love of distinction, a wish to be original, which is seldom wanting; and we have Affectation, the bane of literature, as Cant, its elder brother, is of morals. How often does the one and the other front us, in poetry, as in life! Great poets themselves are not always free of this vice; nay, it is precisely on a certain sort and degree of greatness that it is most commonly ingrafted. A strong effort after excellence will sometimes solace itself with a mere shadow of success; he who has much to unfold, will sometimes unfold it imperfectly. Byron, for instance, was no common man: yet if we examine his poetry with this view, we shall find it far enough from faultless. Generally speaking, we should say that it is not true. He refreshes us, not with the divine fountain, but too often with vulgar strong waters, stimulating indeed to the taste, but soon ending in dislike, or even nausea. Are his Harolds and Giaours, we would ask, real men; we mean, poetically consistent and conceivable men? Do not these characters, does not the character of their author, which more or less shines through them all, rather appear a thing put on for the occasion; no natural or possible mode of being, but something intended to look much grander than nature? Surely, all these stormful agonies, this volcanic heroism, superhuman contempt, and moody desperation, with

so much scowling, and teeth-gnashing, and other sulphurous humor, is more like the brawling of a player in some paltry tragedy, which is to last three hours, than the bearing of a man in the business of life, which is to last threescore and ten years. To our minds there is a taint of this sort, something which we should call theatrical, false, affected, in every one of these otherwise so powerful pieces. Perhaps *Don Juan*, especially the latter parts of it, is the only thing approaching to a *sincere* work, he ever wrote; the only work where he showed himself, in any measure, as he was; and seemed so intent on his subject as, for moments, to forget himself. Yet Byron hated this vice; we believe, heartily detested it: nay, he had declared formal war against it in words. So difficult is it even for the strongest to make this primary attainment, which might seem the simplest of all, to *read its own consciousness without mistakes*, without errors involuntary or wilful! We recollect no poet of Burns's susceptibility who comes before us from the first, and abides with us to the last, with such a total want of affectation. He is an honest man, and an honest writer. In his successes and his failures, in his greatness and his littleness, he is ever clear, simple, true, and glitters with no lustre but his own. We reckon this to be a great virtue; to be, in fact, the root of most other virtues, literary as well as moral.

Here, however, let us say, it is to the Poetry of Burns that we now allude; to those writings which he had time to meditate, and where no special reason existed to warp his critical feeling, or obstruct his endeavor to fulfil it. Certain of his Letters, and other fractions of prose composition, by no means deserve this praise. Here, doubtless, there is not the same natural truth of style; but on the contrary, something not only stiff, but strained and twisted; a certain high-flown inflated tone; the stilting emphasis of which contrasts ill with the firmness and rugged simplicity of even his poorest verses. Thus no man, it would appear, is altogether

unaffected. Does not Shakspeare himself sometimes premeditate the sheerest bombast! But even with regard to these Letters of Burns, it is but fair to state that he had two excuses. The first was his comparative deficiency in language. Burns, though for most part he writes with singular force, and even gracefulness, is not master of English prose, as he is of Scottish verse; not master of it, we mean, in proportion to the depth and vehemence of his matter. These Letters strike us as the effort of a man to express something which he has no organ fit for expressing. But a second and weightier excuse is to be found in the peculiarity of Burns's social rank. His correspondents are often men whose relation to him he has never accurately ascertained; whom therefore he is either forearming himself against, or else unconsciously flattering, by adopting the style he thinks will please them. At all events, we should remember that these faults, even in his Letters, are not the rule, but the exception. Whenever he writes, as one would ever wish to do, to trusted friends and on real interests, his style becomes simple, vigorous, expressive, sometimes even beautiful. His letters to Mrs. Dunlop are uniformly excellent.

But we return to his Poetry. In addition to its Sincerity, it has another peculiar merit, which indeed is but a mode, or perhaps a means, of the foregoing: this displays itself in his choice of subjects; or rather in his indifference as to subjects, and the power he has of making all subjects interesting. The ordinary poet, like the ordinary man, is forever seeking in external circumstances the help which can be found only in himself. In what is familiar and near at hand, he discerns no form or comeliness: home is not poetical, but prosaic; it is in some past, distant, conventional heroic world, that poetry resides for him; were he there and not here, were he thus and not so, it would be well with him. Hence our innumerable host of rose-colored Novels and iron-

mailed Epics, with their locality not on the earth, but somewhere nearer to the Moon. Hence our Virgins of the Sun, and our Knights of the Cross, malicious Saracens in turbans, and copper-colored Chiefs in wampum, and so many other truculent figures from the heroic times or the heroic climates, who on all hands swarm in our poetry. Peace be with them! But yet, as a great moralist proposed preaching to the men of this century, so would we fain preach to the poets, 'a sermon on the duty of staying at home.' Let them be sure that heroic ages and heroic climates can do little for them. That form of life has attraction for us, less because it is better or nobler than our own, than simply because it is different; and even this attraction must be of the most transient sort. For will not our own age, one day, be an ancient one; and have as quaint a costume as the rest; not contrasted with the rest, therefore, but ranked along with them, in respect of quaintness? Does Homer interest us now, because he wrote of what passed beyond his native Greece, and two centuries before he was born; or because he wrote what passed in God's world, and in the heart of man, which is the same after thirty centuries? Let our poets look to this: is their feeling really finer, truer, and their vision deeper than that of other men, — they have nothing to fear, even from the humblest subject; is it not so, — they have nothing to hope, but an ephemeral favor, even from the highest.

The poet, we imagine, can never have far to seek for a subject: the elements of his art are in him, and around him on every hand; for him the Ideal world is not remote from the Actual, but under it and within it: nay, he is a poet, precisely because he can discern it there. Wherever there is a sky above him, and a world around him, the poet is in his place; for here too is man's existence, with its infinite longings and small acquirings; its ever-thwarted, ever-renewed endeavors; its unspeakable aspirations, its fears and hopes

that wander through Eternity; and all the mystery of brightness and of gloom that it was ever made of, in any age or climate, since man first began to live. Is there not the fifth act of a Tragedy in every death-bed, though it were a peasant's, and a bed of heath? And are wooings and weddings obsolete, that there can be Comedy no longer? Or are men suddenly grown wise, that Laughter must no longer shake his sides, but be cheated of his Farce? Man's life and nature is as it was, and as it will ever be. But the poet must have an eye to read these things, and a heart to understand them; or they come and pass away before him in vain. He is a *vates*, a seer; a gift of vision has been given him. Has life no meanings for him which another cannot equally decipher; then he is no poet, and Delphi itself will not make him one.

In this respect, Burns, though not perhaps absolutely a great poet, better manifests his capability, better proves the truth of his genius, than if he had by his own strength kept the whole Minerva Press going, to the end of his literary course. He shows himself at least a poet of Nature's own making; and Nature, after all, is still the grand agent in making poets. We often hear of this and the other external condition being requisite for the existence of a poet. Sometimes it is a certain sort of training; he must have studied certain things, studied for instance 'the elder dramatists,' and so learned a poetic language; as if poetry lay in the tongue, not in the heart. At other times we are told he must be bred in a certain rank, and must be on a confidential footing with the higher classes; because, above all things, he must see the world. As to seeing the world, we apprehend this will cause him little difficulty, if he have but eyesight to see it with. Without eyesight, indeed, the task might be hard. The blind or the purblind man 'travels from Dan to Beersheba, and finds it all barren.' But happily every poet is born *in* the world; and sees it, with

or against his will, every day and every hour he lives. The mysterious workmanship of man's heart, the true light and the inscrutable darkness of man's destiny, reveal themselves not only in capital cities and crowded saloons, but in every hut and hamlet where men have their abode. Nay, do not the elements of all human virtues and all human vices; the passions at once of a Borgia and of a Luther, lie written, in stronger or fainter lines, in the consciousness of every individual bosom that has practised honest self-examination? Truly, this same world may be seen in Mossgiel and Tarbolton, if we look well, as clearly as it ever came to light in Crockford's, or the Tuileries itself.

But sometimes still harder requisitions are laid on the poor aspirant to poetry; for it is hinted that he should have *been born* two centuries ago; inasmuch as poetry, about that date, vanished from the earth, and became no longer attainable by men! Such cobweb speculations have, now and then, overhung the field of literature; but they obstruct not the growth of any plant there: the Shakspeare or the Burns, unconsciously, and merely as he walks onward, silently brushes them away. Is not every genius an impossibility till he appear? Why do we call him new and original, if *we* saw where his marble was lying, and what fabric he could rear from it? It is not the material, but the workman that is wanting. It is not the dark *place* that hinders, but the dim *eye*. A Scottish peasant's life was the meanest and rudest of all lives, till Burns became a poet in it, and a poet of it; found it a *man's* life, and therefore significant to men. A thousand battle-fields remain unsung; but the *Wounded Hare* has not perished without its memorial; a balm of mercy yet breathes on us from its dumb agonies, because a poet was there. Our *Halloween* had passed and repassed, in rude awe and laughter, since the era of the Druids; but no Theocritus, till Burns, discerned in it the materials of a Scottish Idyl:

neither was the *Holy Fair* any *Council of Trent* or Roman *Jubilee;* but nevertheless *Superstition* and *Hypocrisy* and *Fun* having been propitious to him, in this man's hand it became a poem, instinct with satire and genuine comic life. Let but the true poet be given us, we repeat it, place him where and how you will; and true poetry will not be wanting.

Independently of the essential gift of poetic feeling, as we have now attempted to describe it, a certain rugged sterling worth pervades whatever Burns has written; a virtue, as of green fields and mountain breezes, dwells in his poetry; it is redolent of natural life and hardy natural men. There is a decisive strength in him, and yet a sweet native gracefulness: he is tender, he is vehement, yet without constraint or too visible effort; he melts the heart, or inflames it, with a power which seems habitual and familiar to him. We see that in this man there was the gentleness, the trembling pity of a woman, with the deep earnestness, the force and passionate ardor of a hero. Tears lie in him, and consuming fire; as lightning lurks in the drops of the summer cloud. He has a resonance in his bosom for every note of human feeling; the high and the low, the sad, the ludicrous, the joyful, are welcome in their turns to his 'lightly-moved and all-conceiving spirit.' And observe with what a fierce prompt force he grasps his subject, be it what it may! How he fixes, as it were, the full image of the matter in his eye; full and clear in every lineament; and catches the real type and essence of it, amid a thousand accidents and superficial circumstances, no one of which misleads him! Is it of reason; some truth to be discovered? No sophistry, no vain surface-logic detains him; quick, resolute, unerring, he pierces through into the marrow of the question; and speaks his verdict with an emphasis that cannot be forgotten. Is it of description; some visual object to be represented? No poet of any age or nation is more graphic than Burns: the characteristic features disclose themselves to him at a glance;

three lines from his hand, and we have a likeness. And, in that rough dialect, in that rude, often awkward metre, so clear and definite a likeness! It seems a draughtsman working with a burnt stick; and yet the burin of a Retzsch is not more expressive or exact.

Of this last excellence, the plainest and most comprehensive of all, being indeed the root and foundation of *every* sort of talent, poetical or intellectual, we could produce innumerable instances from the writings of Burns. Take these glimpses of a snow-storm from his *Winter Night* (the italics are ours):

> When biting Boreas, fell and dour,
> *Sharp shivers* thro' the leafless bow'r,
> And Phœbus *gies a short-liv'd glowr*
> *Far south the lift,*
> *Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r*
> *Or whirling drift:*
>
> 'Ae night the storm the steeples rock'd,
> Poor labor sweet in sleep was lock'd,
> While burns *wi' snawy wreeths upchok'd*
> *Wild-eddying swirl,*
> Or thro' the mining outlet bock'd
> Down headlong hurl.

Are there not 'descriptive touches' here? The describer *saw* this thing; the essential feature and true likeness of every circumstance in it; saw, and not with the eye only. 'Poor labor locked in sweet sleep;' the dead stillness of man, unconscious, vanquished, yet not unprotected, while such strife of the material elements rages, and seems to reign supreme in loneliness: this is of the heart as well as of the eye! — Look also at his image of a thaw, and prophesied fall of the *Auld Brig:*

> When heavy, dark, continued, a'-day rains
> Wi' deepening deluges o'erflow the plains;
> When from the hills where springs the brawling Coil,
> Or stately Lugar's *mossy* fountains *boil,*

Or where the Greenock winds his *moorland* course,
Or haunted Garpal* draws his feeble source,
Arous'd by blust'ring winds and *spotting* thowes,
In mony a torrent down his snaw-broo rowes;
While crashing ice, borne on the roaring speat,
Sweeps dams and mills and brigs a' to the gate;
And from Glenbuck down to the Rottonkey,
Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd *tumbling* sea;
Then down ye'll hurl, Deil nor ye never rise!
And *dash the gumlie jaups up to the pouring skies.*

The last line is in itself a Poussin-picture of that Deluge! The welkin has, as it were, bent down with its weight; the 'gumlie jaups' and the 'pouring skies' are mingled together; it is a world of rain and ruin. — In respect of mere clearness and minute fidelity, the *Farmer's* commendation of his *Auld Mare*, in plough or in cart, may vie with Homer's Smithy of the Cyclops, or yoking of Priam's Chariot. Nor have we forgotten stout *Burn-the-wind* and his brawny customers, inspired by *Scotch Drink:* but it is needless to multiply examples. One other trait of a much finer sort we select from multitudes of such among his *Songs*. It gives, in a single line, to the saddest feeling the saddest environment and local habitation:

The pale Moon is setting beyond the white wave,
And Time is setting wi' me, O;
Farewell, false friends! false lover, farewell!
I'll nae mair trouble them nor thee, O.

This clearness of sight we have called the foundation of all talent; for in fact, unless we *see* our object, how shall we know how to place or prize it, in our understanding, our imagination, our affections? Yet it is not in itself, perhaps, a very high excellence; but capable of being united indifferently with the strongest, or with ordinary power. Homer surpasses all men in this quality: but strangely enough, at no great distance below him are Rich-

* *Fabulosus* Hydaspes!

ardson and Defoe. It belongs, in truth, to what is called a lively mind; and gives no sure indication of the higher endowments that may exist along with it. In all the three cases we have mentioned, it is combined with great garrulity; their descriptions are detailed, ample and lovingly exact; Homer's fire bursts through, from time to time, as if by accident; but Defoe and Richardson have no fire. Burns, again, is not more distinguished by the clearness than by the impetuous force of his conceptions. Of the strength, the piercing emphasis with which he thought, his emphasis of expression may give a humble but the readiest proof. Who ever uttered sharper sayings than his; words more memorable, now by their burning vehemence, now by their cool vigor and laconic pith? A single phrase depicts a whole subject, a whole scene. We hear of 'a gentleman that derived his patent of nobility direct from Almighty God.' Our Scottish forefathers in the battle-field struggled forward, he says, '*red-wat-shod:*' giving in this one word, a full vision of horror and carnage; perhaps too frightfully accurate for Art!

In fact, one of the leading features in the mind of Burns is this vigor of his strictly intellectual perceptions. A resolute force is ever visible in his judgments, and in his feelings and volitions. Professor Stewart says of him, with some surprise: 'All the faculties of Burns's mind were, as far as I could judge, equally vigorous; and his predilection for poetry was rather the result of his own enthusiastic and impassioned temper, than of a genius exclusively adapted to that species of composition. From his conversation I should have pronounced him to be fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambition he had chosen to exert his abilities.' But this, if we mistake not, is at all times the very essence of a truly poetical endowment. Poetry, except in such cases as that of Keats, where the whole consists in extreme sensibility, and a certain vague,

pervading tunefulness of nature, is no separate faculty, no organ which can be superadded to the rest, or disjoined from them; but rather the result of their general harmony and completion. The feelings, the gifts, that exist in the Poet are those that exist, with more or less development, in every human soul: the imagination which shudders at the Hell of Dante, is the same faculty, weaker in degree, which called that picture into being. How does the Poet speak to men, with power, but by being still more a man than they? Shakspeare, it has been well observed, in the planning and completing of his tragedies, has shown an Understanding, were it nothing more, which might have governed states, or indited a *Novum Organum*. What Burns's force of understanding may have been, we have less means of judging: it had to dwell among the humblest objects; never saw Philosophy; never rose, except by natural effort and for short intervals, into the region of great ideas. Nevertheless, sufficient indication, if no proof sufficient, remains for us in his works: we discern the brawny movements of a gigantic though untutored strength; and can understand how, in conversation, his quick sure insight into men and things may, as much as aught else about him, have amazed the best thinkers of his time and country.

But, unless we mistake, the intellectual gift of Burns is fine as well as strong. The more delicate relations of things could not well have escaped his eye, for they were intimately present to his heart. The logic of the senate and the forum is indispensable, but not all-sufficient; nay, perhaps the highest Truth is that which will the most certainly elude it. For this logic works by words, and 'the highest,' it has been said, 'cannot be expressed in words.' We are not without tokens of an openness for this higher truth also, of a keen though uncultivated sense for it, having existed in Burns. Mr. Stewart, it will be remembered, 'wonders,' in the passage above quoted, that Burns

had formed some distinct conception of the 'doctrine of association.' We rather think that far subtler things than the doctrine of association had from of old been familiar to him. Here for instance:

'We know nothing,' thus writes he, 'or next to nothing, of the structure of our souls, so we cannot account for those seeming caprices in them, that one should be particularly pleased with this thing, or struck with that, which, on minds of a different cast, makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favorite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain-daisy, the harebell, the foxglove, the wild-brier rose, the budding birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never hear the loud solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of gray plover in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which, like the Æolian harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident; or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities: a God that made all things, man's immaterial and immortal nature, and a world of weal or woe beyond death and the grave.'

Force and fineness of understanding are often spoken of as something different from general force and fineness of nature, as something partly independent of them. The necessities of language so require it; but in truth these qualities are not distinct and independent: except in special cases, and from special causes, they ever go together. A man of strong understanding is generally a man of strong character; neither is delicacy in the one kind often divided from delicacy in the other. No one, at all events, is ignorant that in the Poetry of Burns keenness of insight keeps pace with keenness of feeling; that his *light* is not more pervading than his *warmth*. He is a man of the most impassioned temper; with passions not strong only, but noble, and of the sort in which great virtues and great poems take their rise. It is reverence, it is love towards

all Nature that inspires him, that opens his eyes to its beauty, and makes heart and voice eloquent in its praise. There is a true old saying, that 'Love furthers knowledge:' but above all, it is the living essence of that knowledge which makes poets; the first principle of its existence, increase, activity. Of Burns's fervid affection, his generous all-embracing Love, we have spoken already, as of the grand distinction of his nature, seen equally in word and deed, in his Life and in his Writings. It were easy to multiply examples. Not man only, but all that environs man in the material and moral universe, is lovely in his sight: 'the hoary hawthorn,' the 'troop of gray plover,' the 'solitary curlew,' all are dear to him; all live in this Earth along with him, and to all he is knit as in mysterious brotherhood. How touching is it, for instance, that, amidst the gloom of personal misery, brooding over the wintry desolation without him and within him, he thinks of the 'ourie cattle' and 'silly sheep,' and their sufferings in the pitiless storm!

> I thought me on the ourie cattle,
> Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
> O' wintry war,
> Or thro' the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle,
> Beneath a scaur.
> Ilk happing bird, wee helpless thing,
> That in the merry months o' spring
> Delighted me to hear thee sing,
> What comes o' thee?
> Where wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing,
> And close thy ee?

The tenant of the mean hut, with its 'ragged roof and chinky wall,' has a heart to pity even these! This is worth several homilies on Mercy; for it is the voice of Mercy herself. Burns, indeed, lives in sympathy; his soul rushes forth into all realms of being; nothing that has existence

can be indifferent to him. The very Devil he cannot hate with right orthodoxy:

> But fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben;
> O, wad ye tak a thought and men'!
> Ye aiblins might, — I dinna ken, —
> Still hae a stake;
> I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
> Even for your sake!

He did not know, probably, that Sterne had been beforehand with him. '"He is the father of curses and lies," said Dr. Slop; "and is cursed and damned already." — "I am sorry for it," quoth my uncle Toby!' — A Poet without Love were a physical and metaphysical impossibility.

But has it not been said, in contradiction to this principle, that 'Indignation makes verses'? It has been so said, and is true enough: but the contradiction is apparent, not real. The Indignation which makes verses is, properly speaking, an inverted Love; the love of some right, some worth, some goodness, belonging to ourselves or others, which has been injured, and which this tempestuous feeling issues forth to defend and avenge. No selfish fury of heart, existing there as a primary feeling, and without its opposite, ever produced much Poetry: otherwise, we suppose, the Tiger were the most musical of all our choristers. Johnson said he loved a good hater; by which he must have meant, not so much one that hated violently, as one that hated wisely; hated baseness from love of nobleness. However, in spite of Johnson's paradox, tolerable enough for once in speech, but which need not have been so often adopted in print since then, we rather believe that good men deal sparingly in hatred, either wise or unwise: nay that a 'good' hater is still a desideratum in this world. The Devil, at least, who passes for the chief and best of that class, is said to be nowise an amiable character.

Of the verses which Indignation makes, Burns has also

given us specimens: and among the best that were ever given. Who will forget his '*Dweller in yon Dungeon dark;*' a piece that might have been chanted by the Furies of Æschylus? The secrets of the infernal Pit are laid bare; a boundless, baleful 'darkness visible;' and streaks of hell-fire quivering madly in its black haggard bosom!

> Dweller in yon Dungeon dark,
> Hangman of Creation, mark!
> Who in widow's weeds appears,
> Laden with unhonored years,
> Noosing with care a bursting purse,
> Baited with many a deadly curse!

Why should we speak of '*Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled;*' since all know of it, from the king to the meanest of his subjects? This dithyrambic was composed on horseback; in riding in the middle of tempests, over the wildest Galloway moor, in company with a Mr. Syme, who, observing the poet's looks, forbore to speak,—judiciously enough, for a man composing *Bruce's Address* might be unsafe to trifle with. Doubtless this stern hymn was singing itself, as he formed it, through the soul of Burns: but to the external ear, it should be sung with the throat of the whirlwind. So long as there is warm blood in the heart of Scotchman or man, it will move in fierce thrills under this war-ode; the best, we believe, that was ever written by any pen.

Another wild stormful Song, that dwells in our ear and mind with a strange tenacity, is *Macpherson's Farewell.* Perhaps there is something in the tradition itself that coöperates. For was not this grim Celt, this shaggy Northland Cacus, that 'lived a life of sturt and strife, and died by treacherie,'—was not he too one of the Nimrods and Napoleons of the earth, in the arena of his own remote misty glens, for want of a clearer and wider one? Nay, was there not a touch of grace given him? A fibre of love

and softness, of poetry itself, must have lived in his savage heart: for he composed that air the night before his execution; on the wings of that poor melody his better soul would soar away above oblivion, pain, and all the ignominy and despair, which, like an avalanche, was hurling him to the abyss! Here also, as at Thebes, and in Pelops' line, was material Fate matched against man's Free-will; matched in bitterest though obscure duel; and the ethereal soul sank not, even in its blindness, without a cry which has survived it. But who, except Burns, could have given words to such a soul; words that we never listen to without a strange half-barbarous, half-poetic fellow-feeling?

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he;
He play'd a spring, and danced it round,
Below the gallows-tree.

Under a lighter disguise, the same principle of Love, which we have recognized as the great characteristic of Burns, and of all true poets, occasionally manifests itself in the shape of Humor. Everywhere, indeed, in his sunny moods, a full buoyant flood of mirth rolls through the mind of Burns; he rises to the high, and stoops to the low, and is brother and playmate to all Nature. We speak not of his bold and often irresistible faculty of caricature; for this is Drollery rather than Humor: but a much tenderer sportfulness dwells in him; and comes forth here and there, in evanescent and beautiful touches; as in his *Address to the Mouse*, or the *Farmer's Mare*, or in his *Elegy on poor Mailie*, which last may be reckoned his happiest effort of this kind. In these pieces there are traits of a Humor as fine as that of Sterne; yet altogether different, original, peculiar, — the Humor of Burns.

Of the tenderness, the playful pathos, and many other kindred qualities of Burns's Poetry, much more might be said: but now, with these poor outlines of a sketch, we

must prepare to quit this part of our subject. To speak of his individual Writings, adequately and with any detail, would lead us far beyond our limits. As already hinted, we can look on but few of these pieces as, in strict critical language, deserving the name of Poems: they are rhymed eloquence, rhymed pathos, rhymed sense; yet seldom essentially melodious, aerial, poetical. *Tam o' Shanter* itself, which enjoys so high a favor, does not appear to us at all decisively to come under this last category. It is not so much a poem, as a piece of sparkling rhetoric; the heart and body of the story still lies hard and dead. He has not gone back, much less carried us back, into that dark, earnest, wondering age, when the tradition was believed, and when it took its rise; he does not attempt, by any new-modeling of his supernatural ware, to strike anew that deep, mysterious chord of human nature, which once responded to such things; and which lives in us too, and will forever live, though silent now, or vibrating with far other notes, and to far different issues. Our German readers will understand us, when we say that he is not the Tieck but the Musäus of this tale. Externally it is all green and living; yet look closer, it is no firm growth, but only ivy on a rock. The piece does not properly cohere: the strange chasm which yawns in our incredulous imaginations between the Ayr public-house and the gate of Tophet, is nowhere bridged over, nay, the idea of such a bridge is laughed at; and thus the Tragedy of the adventure becomes a mere drunken phantasmagoria, or many-colored spectrum painted on ale-vapors, and the Farce alone has any reality. We do not say that Burns should have made much more of this tradition; we rather think that, for strictly poetical purposes, not much *was* to be made of it. Neither are we blind to the deep, varied, genial power displayed in what he has actually accomplished; but we find far more 'Shakspearean' qualities, as these of *Tam o' Shanter* have

been fondly named, in many of his other pieces; nay, we incline to believe that this latter might have been written, all but quite as well, by a man who, in place of genius, had only possessed talent.

Perhaps we may venture to say, that the most strictly poetical of all his 'poems' is one which does not appear in Currie's Edition; but has been often printed before and since, under the humble title of *The Jolly Beggars.* The subject truly is among the lowest in Nature; but it only the more shows our Poet's gift in raising it into the domain of Art. To our minds, this piece seems thoroughly compacted; melted together, refined; and poured forth in one flood of true *liquid* harmony. It is light, airy, soft of movement; yet sharp and precise in its details; every face is a portrait: that *raucle carlin,* that *wee Apollo,* that *Son of Mars,* are Scottish, yet ideal; the scene is at once a dream, and the very Ragcastle of 'Poosie-Nansie.' Farther, it seems in a considerable degree complete, a real self-supporting Whole, which is the highest merit in a poem. The blanket of the Night is drawn asunder for a moment; in full, ruddy, flaming light, these rough tatterdemalions are seen in their boisterous revel; for the strong pulse of Life vindicates its right to gladness even here; and when the curtain closes, we prolong the action, without effort; the next day as the last, our *Caird* and our *Balladmonger* are singing and soldiering; their 'brats and callets' are hawking, begging, cheating; and some other night, in new combinations, they will wring from Fate another hour of wassail and good cheer. Apart from the universal sympathy with man which this again bespeaks in Burns, a genuine inspiration and no inconsiderable technical talent are manifested here. There is the fidelity, humor, warm life, and accurate painting and grouping of some Teniers, for whom hostlers and carousing peasants are not without significance. It would be strange, doubtless, to call this

the best of Burns's writings: we mean to say only that it seems to us the most perfect of its kind, as a piece of poetical composition, strictly so called. In the *Beggars' Opera*, in the *Beggars' Bush*, as other critics have already remarked, there is nothing which, in real poetic vigor, equals this *Cantata;* nothing, as we think, which comes within many degrees of it.

But by far the most finished, complete, and truly inspired pieces of Burns are, without dispute, to be found among his *Songs*. It is here that, although through a small aperture, his light shines with least obstruction; in its highest beauty and pure sunny clearness. The reason may be, that Song is a brief, simple species of composition; and requires nothing so much for its perfection as genuine poetic feeling, genuine music of heart. Yet the Song has its rules equally with the Tragedy; rules which in most cases are poorly fulfilled, in many cases are not so much as felt. We might write a long essay on the Songs of Burns; which we reckon by far the best that Britain has yet produced: for indeed, since the era of Queen Elizabeth, we know not that, by any other hand, aught truly worth attention has been accomplished in this department. True, we have songs enough 'by persons of quality;' we have tawdry, hollow, wine-bred madrigals; many a rhymed speech 'in the flowing and watery vein of Ossorius the Portugal Bishop,' rich in sonorous words, and, for moral, dashed perhap with some tint of a sentimental sensuality; all which many persons cease not from endeavoring to sing; though for most part, we fear, the music is but from the throat outwards, or at best from some region far enough short of the *Soul;* not in which, but in a certain inane Limbo of the Fancy, or even in some vaporous debatable-land on the outskirts of the Nervous System, most of such madrigals and rhymed speeches seem to have originated.

With the Songs of Burns we must not name these things. Independently of the clear, manly, heartfelt sentiment that ever pervades *his* poetry, his Songs are honest in another point of view: in form, as well as in spirit. They do not *affect* to be set to music, but they actually and in themselves are music; they have received their life, and fashioned themselves together, in the medium of Harmony, as Venus rose from the bosom of the sea. The story, the feeling, is not detailed, but suggested; not *said*, or spouted, in rhetorical completeness and coherence; but *sung*, in fitful gushes, in glowing hints, in fantastic breaks, in *warblings* not of the voice only, but of the whole mind. We consider this to be the essence of a song; and that no songs since the little careless catches, and as it were drops of song, which Shakspeare has here and there sprinkled over his Plays, fulfill this condition in nearly the same degree as most of Burns's do. Such grace and truth of external movement, too, presupposes in general a corresponding force and truth of sentiment and inward meaning. The Songs of Burns are not more perfect in the former quality than in the latter. With what tenderness he sings, yet with what vehemence and entireness! There is a piercing wail in his sorrow, the purest rapture in his joy; he burns with the sternest ire, or laughs with the loudest or sliest mirth; and yet he is sweet and soft, 'sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet, and soft as their parting tear.' If we farther take into account the immense variety of his subjects; how, from the loud flowing revel in '*Willie brew'd a Peck o' Maut*,' to the still, rapt enthusiasm of sadness for *Mary in Heaven;* from the glad kind greeting of *Auld Langsyne*, or the comic archness of *Duncan Gray*, to the fire-eyed fury of '*Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled*,' he has found a tone and words for every mood of man's heart, — it will seem a small praise if we rank him as the first of all our Song-writers; for we know not where to find one worthy of being second to him.

It is on his Songs, as we believe, that Burns's chief influence as an author will ultimately be found to depend: nor, if our Fletcher's aphorism is true, shall we account this a small influence. 'Let me make the songs of a people,' said he, 'and you shall make its laws.' Surely, if ever any Poet might have equaled himself with Legislators on this ground, it was Burns. His Songs are already part of the mother-tongue, not of Scotland only but of Britain, and of the millions that in all ends of the earth speak a British language. In hut and hall, as the heart unfolds itself in many-colored joy and woe of existence, the *name*, the *voice* of that joy and that woe, is the name and voice which Burns has given them. Strictly speaking, perhaps no British man has so deeply affected the thoughts and feelings of so many men, as this solitary and altogether private individual, with means apparently the humblest.

In another point of view, moreover, we incline to think that Burns's influence may have been considerable: we mean, as exerted specially on the Literature of his country, at least on the Literature of Scotland. Among the great changes which British, particularly Scottish, literature has undergone since that period, one of the greatest will be found to consist in its remarkable increase of nationality. Even the English writers, most popular in Burns's time, were little distinguished for their literary patriotism, in this its best sense. A certain attenuated cosmopolitanism had, in good measure, taken place of the old insular home-feeling; literature was, as it were, without any local environment; was not nourished by the affections which spring from a native soil. Our Grays and Glovers seemed to write almost as if *in vacuo;* the thing written bears no mark of place; it is not written so much for Englishmen, as for men; or rather, which is the inevitable result of this, for certain Generalizations which philosophy termed men. Goldsmith is an exception: not so Johnson; the scene of his *Rambler* is little more English than that of his *Rasselas.*

But if such was, in some degree, the case with England, it was, in the highest degree, the case with Scotland. In fact, our Scottish literature had, at that period, a very singular aspect; unexampled, so far as we know, except perhaps at Geneva, where the same state of matters appears still to continue. For a long period after Scotland became British, we had no literature: at the date when Addison and Steele were writing their *Spectators*, our good John Boston was writing, with the noblest intent, but alike in defiance of grammar and philosophy, his *Fourfold State of Man*. Then came the schisms in our National Church, and the fiercer schisms in our Body Politic: Theologic ink, and Jacobite blood, with gall enough in both cases, seemed to have blotted out the intellect of the country: however, it was only obscured, not obliterated. Lord Kames made nearly the first attempt, and a tolerably clumsy one, at writing English; and ere long, Hume, Robertson, Smith, and a whole host of followers, attracted hither the eyes of all Europe. And yet in this brilliant resuscitation of our 'fervid genius,' there was nothing truly Scottish, nothing indigenous; except, perhaps, the natural impetuosity of intellect, which we sometimes claim, and are sometimes upbraided with, as a characteristic of our nation. It is curious to remark that Scotland, so full of writers, had no Scottish culture, nor indeed any English; our culture was almost exclusively French. It was by studying Racine and Voltaire, Batteux and Boileau, that Kames had trained himself to be a critic and philosopher; it was the light of Montesquieu and Mably that guided Robertson in his political speculations; Quesnay's lamp that kindled the lamp of Adam Smith. Hume was too rich a man to borrow; and perhaps he reacted on the French more than he was acted on by them: but neither had he aught to do with Scotland; Edinburgh, equally with La Flèche, was but the lodging and laboratory, in which he not so much morally *lived*, as meta-

physically *investigated*. Never, perhaps, was there a class of writers so clear and well-ordered, yet so totally destitute, to all appearance, of any patriotic affection, nay, of any human affection whatever. The French wits of the period were as unpatriotic: but their general deficiency in moral principle, not to say their avowed sensuality and unbelief in all virtue, strictly so called, render this accountable enough. We hope there is a patriotism founded on something better than prejudice; that our country may be dear to us, without injury to our philosophy; that in loving and justly prizing all other lands, we may prize justly, and yet love before all others, our own stern Motherland, and the venerable Structure of social and moral Life, which Mind has through long ages been building up for us there. Surely there is nourishment for the better part of man's heart in all this: surely the roots that have fixed themselves in the very core of man's being, may be so cultivated as to grow up not into briers, but into roses, in the field of his life! Our Scottish sages have no such propensities: the field of their life shows neither briers nor roses; but only a flat, continuous thrashing-floor for Logic, whereon all questions, from the 'Doctrine of Rent' to the 'Natural History of Religion,' are thrashed and sifted with the same mechanical impartiality!

With Sir Walter Scott at the head of our literature, it cannot be denied that much of this evil is past, or rapidly passing away: our chief literary men, whatever other faults they may have, no longer live among us like a French Colony, or some knot of Propaganda Missionaries; but like natural-born subjects of the soil, partaking and sympathizing in all our attachments, humors, and habits. Our literature no longer grows in water but in mould, and with the true racy virtues of the soil and climate. How much of this change may be due to Burns, or to any other individual, it might be difficult to estimate. Direct literary imitation of

Burns was not to be looked for. But his example, in the fearless adoption of domestic subjects, could not but operate from afar; and certainly in no heart did the love of country ever burn with a warmer glow than in that of Burns: 'a tide of Scottish prejudice,' as he modestly calls this deep and generous feeling, 'had been poured along his veins; and he felt that it would boil there till the flood-gates shut in eternal rest.' It seemed to him, as if *he* could do so little for his country, and yet would so gladly have done all. One small province stood open for him, — that of Scottish Song; and how eagerly he entered on it, how devotedly he labored there! In his toilsome journeyings, this object never quits him; it is the little happy-valley of his care-worn heart. In the gloom of his own affliction, he eagerly searches after some lonely brother of the muse, and rejoices to snatch one other name from the oblivion that was covering it! These were early feelings, and they abode with him to the end:

> . . . A wish (I mind its power),
> A wish, that to my latest hour
> Shall strongly heave my breast, —
> That I, for poor auld Scotland's sake,
> Some usefu' plan or book could make,
> Or sing a sang at least.
> The rough bur-thistle, spreading wide
> Amang the bearded bear,
> I turn'd my weeding-clips aside,
> And spared the symbol dear.

But to leave the mere literary character of Burns, which has already detained us too long. Far more interesting than any of his written works, as it appears to us, are his acted ones: the Life he willed and was fated to lead among his fellow-men. These Poems are but like little rhymed fragments scattered here and there in the grand unrhymed Romance of his earthly existence; and it is only when in-

tercalated in this at their proper places, that they attain their full measure of significance. And this too, alas, was but a fragment! The plan of a mighty edifice had been sketched; some columns, porticos, firm masses of building, stand completed; the rest more or less clearly indicated; with many a far-stretching tendency, which only studious and friendly eyes can now trace towards the purposed termination. For the work is broken off in the middle, almost in the beginning; and rises among us, beautiful and sad, at once unfinished and a ruin! If charitable judgment was necessary in estimating his Poems, and justice required that the aim and the manifest power to fulfil it must often be accepted for the fulfilment; much more is this the case in regard to his Life, the sum and result of all his endeavors, where his difficulties came upon him not in detail only, but in mass; and so much has been left unaccomplished, nay, was mistaken, and altogether marred.

Properly speaking, there is but one era in the life of Burns, and that the earliest. We have not youth and manhood, but only youth: for, to the end, we discern no decisive change in the complexion of his character; in his thirty-seventh year, he is still, as it were, in youth. With all that resoluteness of judgment, that penetrating insight, and singular maturity of intellectual power, exhibited in his writings, he never attains to any clearness regarding himself; to the last, he never ascertains his peculiar aim, even with such distinctness as is common among ordinary men; and therefore never can pursue it with that singleness of will, which insures success and some contentment to such men. To the last, he wavers between two purposes: glorying in his talent, like a true poet, he yet cannot consent to make this his chief and sole glory, and to follow it as the one thing needful, through poverty or riches, through good or evil report. Another far meaner ambition still cleaves to him; he must dream and struggle about a

certain 'Rock of Independence;' which, natural and even admirable as it might be, was still but a warring with the world, on the comparatively insignificant ground of his being more completely or less completely supplied with money than others; of his standing at a higher or at a lower altitude in general estimation than others. For the world still appears to him, as to the young, in borrowed colors: he expects from it what it cannot give to any man; seeks for contentment, not within himself, in action and wise effort, but from without, in the kindness of circumstances, in love, friendship, honor, pecuniary ease. He would be happy, not actively and in himself, but passively and from some ideal cornucopia of Enjoyments, not earned by his own labor, but showered on him by the beneficence of Destiny. Thus, like a young man, he cannot gird himself up for any worthy well-calculated goal, but swerves to and fro, between passionate hope and remorseful disappointment: rushing onwards with a deep tempestuous force, he surmounts or breaks asunder many a barrier; travels, nay, advances far, but advancing only under uncertain guidance, is ever and anon turned from his path; and to the last cannot reach the only true happiness of a man, that of clear decided Activity in the sphere for which, by nature and circumstances, he has been fitted and appointed.

We do not say these things in dispraise of Burns; nay, perhaps, they but interest us the more in his favor. This blessing is not given soonest to the best; but rather, it is often the greatest minds that are latest in obtaining it; for where most is to be developed, most time may be required to develop it. A complex condition had been assigned him from without; as complex a condition from within: no 'preëstablished harmony' existed between the clay soil of Mossgiel and the empyrean soul of Robert Burns; it was not wonderful that the adjustment between them should have been long postponed, and his arm long

cumbered, and his sight confused, in so vast and discordant an economy as he had been appointed steward over. Byron was, at his death, but a year younger than Burns; and through life, as it might have appeared, far more simply situated: yet in him too we can trace no such adjustment, no such moral manhood; but at best, and only a little before his end, the beginning of what seemed such.

By much the most striking incident in Burns's Life is his journey to Edinburgh; but perhaps a still more important one is his residence at Irvine, so early as in his twenty-third year. Hitherto his life had been poor and toilworn; but otherwise not ungenial, and, with all its distresses, by no means unhappy. In his parentage, deducting outward circumstances, he had every reason to reckon himself fortunate. His father was a man of thoughtful, intense, earnest character, as the best of our peasants are; valuing knowledge, possessing some, and, what is far better and rarer, open-minded for more: a man with a keen insight and devout heart; reverent towards God, friendly therefore at once and fearless, towards all that God has made: in one word, though but a hard-handed peasant, a complete and fully unfolded *Man*. Such a father is seldom found in any rank in society; and was worth descending far in society to seek. Unfortunately, he was very poor; had he been even a little richer, almost never so little, the whole might have issued far otherwise. Mighty events turn on a straw; the crossing of a brook decides the conquest of the world. Had this William Burns's small seven acres of nursery-ground anywise prospered, the boy Robert had been sent to school; had struggled forward, as so many weaker men do, to some university; come forth not as a rustic wonder, but as a regular well-trained intellectual workman, and changed the whole course of British Literature, — for it lay in him to have done this! But the nursery did not prosper; poverty sank his whole family below the help of even our cheap school-system:

Burns remained a hard-worked ploughboy, and British literature took its own course. Nevertheless, even in this rugged scene there is much to nourish him. If he drudges, it is with his brother, and for his father and mother, whom he loves, and would fain shield from want. Wisdom is not banished from their poor hearth, nor the balm of natural feeling: the solemn words, '*Let us worship God,*' are heard there from a priest-like father; if threatenings of unjust men throw mother and children into tears, these are tears not of grief only, but of holiest affection; every heart in that humble group feels itself the closer knit to every other; in their hard warfare they are there together, a 'little band of brethren.' Neither are such tears, and the deep beauty that dwells in them, their only portion. Light visits the hearts as it does the eyes of all living: there is a force, too, in this youth, that enables him to trample on misfortune; nay, to bind it under his feet to make him sport. For a bold, warm, buoyant humor of character has been given him; and so the thick-coming shapes of evil are welcomed with a gay, friendly irony, and in their closest pressure he bates no jot of heart or hope. Vague yearnings of ambition fail not, as he grows up; dreamy fancies hang like cloud-cities around him; the curtain of Existence is slowly rising, in many-colored splendor and gloom: and the auroral light of first love is gilding his horizon, and the music of song is on his path; and so he walks

> . . . . . in glory and in joy,
> Behind his plough, upon the mountain side.

We ourselves know, from the best evidence, that up to this date Burns was happy; nay, that he was the gayest, brightest, most fantastic, fascinating being to be found in the world; more so even than he ever afterwards appeared. But now, at this early age, he quits the paternal roof; goes forth into looser, louder, more exciting society; and becomes

initiated in those dissipations, those vices, which a certain class of philosophers have asserted to be a natural preparative for entering on active life; a kind of mud-bath, in which the youth is, as it were, necessitated to steep, and, we suppose, cleanse himself, before the real toga of Manhood can be laid on him. We shall not dispute much with this class of philosophers; we hope they are mistaken: for Sin and Remorse so easily beset us at all stages of life, and are always such indifferent company, that it seems hard we should, at any stage, be forced and fated not only to meet but to yield to them, and even serve for a term in their leprous armada. We hope it is not so. Clear we are, at all events, it cannot be the training one receives in this Devil's service, but only our determining to desert from it, that fits us for true manly Action. We become men, not after we have been dissipated, and disappointed in the chase of false pleasure; but after we have ascertained, in any way, what impassable barriers hem us in through this life; how mad it is to hope for contentment to our infinite soul from the *gifts* of this extremely finite world; that a man must be sufficient for himself; and that for suffering and enduring there is no remedy but striving and doing. Manhood begins when we have in any way made truce with Necessity; begins even when we have surrendered to Necessity, as the most part only do; but begins joyfully and hopefully only when we have reconciled ourselves to Necessity; and thus, in reality, triumphed over it, and felt that in Necessity we are free. Surely, such lessons as this last, which, in one shape or other, is the grand lesson for every mortal man, are better learned from the lips of a devout mother, in the looks and actions of a devout father, while the heart is yet soft and pliant, than in collision with the sharp adamant of Fate, attracting us to shipwreck us, when the heart is grown hard, and may be broken before it will become contrite. Had Burns continued to learn this, as he was already learning it, in his father's cottage, he

would have learned it fully, which he never did; and been saved many a lasting aberration, many a bitter hour and year of remorseful sorrow.

It seems to us another circumstance of fatal import in Burns's history, that at this time too he became involved in the religious quarrels of his district; that he was enlisted and feasted, as the fighting man of the New-Light Priesthood, in their highly unprofitable warfare. At the tables of these free-minded clergy he learned much more than was needful for him. Such liberal ridicule of fanaticism awakened in his mind scruples about Religion itself; and a whole world of Doubts, which it required quite another set of conjurors than these men to exorcise. We do not say that such an intellect as his could have escaped similar doubts at some period of his history; or even that he could, at a later period, have come through them altogether victorious and unharmed: but it seems peculiarly unfortunate that this time, above all others, should have been fixed for the encounter. For now, with principles assailed by evil example from without, by 'passions raging like demons' from within, he had little need of sceptical misgivings to whisper treason in the heat of the battle, or to cut off his retreat if he were already defeated. He loses his feeling of innocence; his mind is at variance with itself; the old divinity no longer presides there; but wild Desires and wild Repentance alternately oppress him. Ere long, too, he has committed himself before the world; his character for sobriety, dear to a Scottish peasant as few corrupted worldlings can even conceive, is destroyed in the eyes of men; and his only refuge consists in trying to disbelieve his guiltiness, and is but a refuge of lies. The blackest desperation now gathers over him, broken only by red lightnings of remorse. The whole fabric of his life is blasted asunder; for now not only his character, but his personal liberty, is to be lost; men and Fortune are leagued

for his hurt; 'hungry Ruin has him in the wind.' He sees no escape but the saddest of all: exile from his loved country, to a country in every sense inhospitable and abhorrent to him. While the 'gloomy night is gathering fast,' in mental storm and solitude, as well as in physical, he sings his wild farewell to Scotland:

> Farewell, my friends; farewell, my foes!
> My peace with these, my love with those:
> The bursting tears my heart declare;
> Adieu, my native banks of Ayr!

Light breaks suddenly in on him in floods; but still a false transitory light, and no real sunshine. He is invited to Edinburgh; hastens thither with anticipating heart; is welcomed as in a triumph, and with universal blandishment and acclamation; whatever is wisest, whatever is greatest or loveliest there, gathers round him, to gaze on his face, to show him honor, sympathy, affection. Burns's appearance among the sages and nobles of Edinburgh must be regarded as one of the most singular phenomena in modern Literature; almost like the appearance of some Napoleon among the crowned sovereigns of modern Politics. For it is nowise as a 'mockery king,' set there by favor, transiently and for a purpose, that he will let himself be treated; still less is he a mad Rienzi, whose sudden elevation turns his too weak head: but he stands there on his own basis; cool, unastonished, holding his equal rank from Nature herself; putting forth no claim which there is not strength *in* him, as well as about him, to vindicate. Mr. Lockhart has some forcible observations on this point:

> 'It needs no effort of imagination,' says he, 'to conceive what the sensations of an isolated set of scholars (almost all either clergymen or professors) must have been in the presence of this big-boned, black-browed, brawny stranger, with his great flashing eyes, who, having forced his way among them from the plough-tail at a single stride, manifested in the whole strain of his bearing and conversation a most

thorough conviction, that in the society of the most eminent men of his nation he was exactly where he was entitled to be; hardly deigned to flatter them by exhibiting even an occasional symptom of being flattered by their notice; by turns calmly measured himself against the most cultivated understandings of his time in discussion; overpowered the *bonsmots* of the most celebrated convivialists by broad floods of merriment, impregnated with all the burning life of genius; astounded bosoms habitually enveloped in the thrice-piled folds of social reserve, by compelling them to tremble, — nay, to tremble visibly, — beneath the fearless touch of natural pathos; and all this without indicating the smallest willingness to be ranked among those professional ministers of excitement, who are content to be paid in money and smiles for doing what the spectators and auditors would be ashamed of doing in their own persons, even if they had the power of doing it; and last, and probably worst of all, who was known to be in the habit of enlivening societies which they would have scorned to approach, still more frequently than their own, with eloquence no less magnificent; with wit, in all likelihood still more daring; often enough, as the superiors whom he fronted without alarm might have guessed from the beginning, and had ere long no occasion to guess, with wit pointed at themselves.'

The farther we remove from this scene, the more singular will it seem to us: details of the exterior aspect of it are already full of interest. Most readers recollect Mr. Walker's personal interviews with Burns as among the best passages of his Narrative: a time will come when this reminiscence of Sir Walter Scott's, slight though it is, will also be precious:

'As for Burns,' writes Sir Walter, 'I may truly say, *Virgilium vidi tantum*. I was a lad of fifteen in 1786–7, when he came first to Edinburgh, but had sense and feeling enough to be much interested in his poetry, and would have given the world to know him: but I had very little acquaintance with any literary people, and still less with the gentry of the west country; the two sets that he most frequented. Mr. Thomas Grierson was at that time a clerk of my father's. He knew Burns, and promised to ask him to his lodgings to dinner; but had no opportunity to keep his word; otherwise I might have seen more of this distinguished man. As it was, I saw him one

day at the late venerable Professor Ferguson's, where there were several gentlemen of literary reputation, among whom I remember the celebrated Mr. Dugald Stewart. Of course, we youngsters sat silent, looked, and listened. The only thing I remember which was remarkable in Burns's manner, was the effect produced upon him by a print of Bunbury's, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on one side, — on the other, his widow, with a child in her arms. These lines were written beneath:

> "Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,
> Perhaps that mother wept her soldier slain;
> Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew, —
> The big drops mingling with the milk he drew,
> Gave the sad presage of his future years,
> The child of misery, baptized in tears."

Burns seemed much affected by the print, or rather by the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were; and it chanced that nobody but myself remembered that they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Langhorne's called by the unpromising title of "The Justice of Peace." I whispered my information to a friend present; he mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of mere civility, I then received and still recollect with very great pleasure.

His person was strong and robust; his manners rustic, not clownish; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect perhaps from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. His features are represented in Mr. Nasmyth's picture: but to me it conveys the idea that they are diminished, as if seen in perspective. I think his countenance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I should have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scotch school, *i.e.*, none of your modern agriculturists who kept laborers for their drudgery, but the *douce gudeman* who held his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large, and of a dark cast, which glowed (I say literally *glowed*) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were the most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect firmness,

but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty. I do not remember any part of his conversation distinctly enough to be quoted; nor did I ever see him again, except in the street, where he did not recognize me, as I could not expect he should. He was much caressed in Edinburgh: but (considering what literary emoluments have been since his day) the efforts made for his relief were extremely trifling.

I remember, on this occasion I mention, I thought Burns's acquaintance with English poetry was rather limited; and also that, having twenty times the abilities of Allan Ramsay and of Ferguson, he talked of them with too much humility as his models: there was doubtless national predilection in his estimate.

This is all I can tell you about Burns. I have only to add, that his dress corresponded with his manner. He was like a farmer dressed in his best to dine with the laird. I do not speak *in malam partem*, when I say, I never saw a man in company with his superiors in station or information more perfectly free from either the reality or the affectation of embarrassment. I was told, but did not observe it, that his address to females was extremely deferential, and always with a turn either to the pathetic or humorous, which engaged their attention particularly. I have heard the late Duchess of Gordon remark this. —I do not know anything I can add to these recollections of forty years since.'

The conduct of Burns under this dazzling blaze of favor; the calm, unaffected, manly manner in which he not only bore it, but estimated its value, has justly been regarded as the best proof that could be given of his real vigor and integrity of mind. A little natural vanity, some touches of hypocritical modesty, some glimmerings of affectation, at least some fear of being thought affected, we could have pardoned in almost any man; but no such indication is to be traced here. In his unexampled situation the young peasant is not a moment perplexed; so many strange lights do not confuse him, do not lead him astray. Nevertheless, we cannot but perceive that this winter did him great and lasting injury. A somewhat clearer knowledge of men's affairs, scarcely of their characters, it did afford him; but

a sharper feeling of Fortune's unequal arrangements in their social destiny it also left with him. He had seen the gay and gorgeous arena, in which the powerful are born to play their parts; nay, had himself stood in the midst of it; and he felt more bitterly than ever, that here he was but a looker-on, and had no part or lot in that splendid game. From this time a jealous indignant fear of social degradation takes possession of him; and perverts, so far as aught could pervert, his private contentment, and his feelings towards his richer fellows. It was clear to Burns that he had talent enough to make a fortune, or a hundred fortunes, could he but have rightly willed this; it was clear also that he willed something far different, and therefore could not make one. Unhappy it was that he had not power to choose the one, and reject the other; but must halt forever between two opinions, two objects; making hampered advancement towards either. But so is it with many men: we 'long for the merchandise, yet would fain keep the price;' and so stand chaffering with Fate, in vexatious altercation, till the night come, and our fair is over!

The Edinburgh Learned of that period were in general more noted for clearness of head than for warmth of heart: with the exception of the good old Blacklock, whose help was too ineffectual, scarcely one among them seems to have looked at Burns with any true sympathy, or indeed much otherwise than as at a highly curious *thing*. By the great also he is treated in the customary fashion; entertained at their tables and dismissed: certain modica of pudding and praise are, from time to time, gladly exchanged for the fascination of his presence; which exchange once effected, the bargain is finished, and each party goes his several way. At the end of this strange season, Burns gloomily sums up his gains and losses, and meditates on the chaotic future. In money he is somewhat richer; in fame and the show of happiness, infinitely richer; but in the substance of it, as

poor as ever. Nay, poorer; for his heart is now maddened still more with the fever of worldly Ambition; and through long years the disease will rack him with unprofitable sufferings, and weaken his strength for all true and nobler aims.

What Burns was next to do or to avoid; how a man so circumstanced was now to guide himself towards his true advantage, might at this point of time have been a question for the wisest. It was a question, too, which apparently he was left altogether to answer for himself: of his learned or rich patrons it had not struck any individual to turn a thought on this so trivial matter. Without claiming for Burns the praise of perfect sagacity, we must say that his Excise and Farm scheme does not seem to us a very unreasonable one; that we should be at a loss, even now, to suggest one decidedly better. Certain of his admirers have felt scandalized at his ever resolving to *gauge;* and would have had him lie at the pool, till the spirit of Patronage stirred the waters, that so, with one friendly plunge, all his sorrows might be healed. Unwise counsellors! They know not the manner of this spirit; and how, in the lap of most golden dreams, a man might have happiness, were it not that in the interim he must die of hunger! It reflects credit on the manliness and sound sense of Burns, that he felt so early on what ground he was standing; and preferred self-help, on the humblest scale, to dependence and inaction, though with hope of far more splendid possibilities. But even these possibilities were not rejected in his scheme: he might expect, if it chanced that he *had* any friend, to rise, in no long period, into something even like opulence and leisure; while again, if it chanced that he had no friend, he could still live in security; and for the rest, he 'did not intend to borrow honor from any profession.' We think, then, that his plan was honest and well-calculated: all turned on the execution of it. Doubtless it

failed; yet not, we believe, from any vice inherent in itself. Nay, after all, it was no failure of external means, but of internal, that overtook Burns. His was no bankruptcy of the purse, but of the soul; to his last day, he owed no man anything.

Meanwhile he begins well: with two good and wise actions. His donation to his mother, munificent from a man whose income had lately been seven pounds a-year, was worthy of him, and not more than worthy. Generous also, and worthy of him, was his treatment of the woman whose life's welfare now depended on his pleasure. A friendly observer might have hoped serene days for him: his mind is on the true road to peace with itself: what clearness he still wants will be given as he proceeds; for the best teacher of duties that still lie dim to us, is the Practice of those we see and have at hand. Had the 'patrons of genius,' who could give him nothing, but taken nothing from him, at least nothing more! The wounds of his heart would have healed; vulgar ambition would have died away. Toil and Frugality would have been welcome, since Virtue dwelt with them; and Poetry would have shone through them as of old: and in her clear ethereal light, which was his own by birthright, he might have looked down on his earthly destiny and all its obstructions, not with patience only, but with love.

But the patrons of genius would not have it so. Picturesque tourists,* all manner of fashionable danglers after

* There is one little sketch by certain 'English gentlemen' of this class, which, though adopted in Currie's Narrative, and since then repeated in most others, we have all along felt an invincible disposition to regard as imaginary: 'On a rock that projected into the stream, they saw a man employed in angling, of a singular appearance. He had a cap made of fox skin on his head, a loose greatcoat fixed round him by a belt, from which depended an enormous Highland broad-sword. It was Burns.' Now, we rather think, it was *not* Burns. For, to say nothing of the fox-skin cap, the loose and quite Hibernian watchcoat with the belt, what are we to make of this 'enormous Highland broad-sword' depending from him? More espe-

literature, and, far worse, all manner of convivial Mæcenases, hovered round him in his retreat; and his good as well as his weak qualities secured them influence over him. He was flattered by their notice; and his warm social nature made it impossible for him to shake them off, and hold on his way apart from them. These men, as we believe, were proximately the means of his ruin. Not that they meant him any ill; they only meant themselves a little good; if he suffered harm, let *him* look to it! But they wasted his precious time and his precious talent; they disturbed his composure, broke down his returning habits of temperance and assiduous contented exertion. Their pampering was baneful to him; their cruelty, which soon followed, was equally baneful. The old grudge against Fortune's inequality awoke with new bitterness in their neighborhood; and Burns had no retreat but to 'the Rock of Independence,' which is but an air-castle after all, that looks well at a distance, but will screen no one from real wind and wet. Flushed with irregular excitement, exasperated alternately by contempt of others and contempt of himself, Burns was no longer regaining his peace of mind, but fast losing it forever. There was a hollowness at the heart of his life, for his conscience did not now approve what he was doing.

Amid the vapors of unwise enjoyment, of bootless remorse, and angry discontent with Fate, his true loadstar, a life of Poetry, with Poverty, nay, with Famine if it must be so, was too often altogether hidden from his eyes. And yet he sailed a sea where without some such loadstar there was no right steering. Meteors of French Politics rise

cially, as there is no word of parish constables on the outlook to see whether, as Dennis phrases it, he had an eye to his own midriff or that of the public! Burns, of all men, had the least need, and the least tendency, to seek for distinction either in his own eyes or those of others, by such poor mummeries.

before him, but these were not *his* stars. An accident this, which hastened, but did not originate, his worst distresses. In the mad contentions of that time, he comes in collision with certain official Superiors; is wounded by them; cruelly lacerated, we should say, could a dead mechanical implement, in any case, be called cruel: and shrinks, in indignant pain, into deeper self-seclusion, into gloomier moodiness than ever. His life has now lost its unity: it is a life of fragments; led with little aim, beyond the melancholy one of securing its own continuance,— in fits of wild false joy when such offered, and of black despondency when they passed away. His character before the world begins to suffer: calumny is busy with him; for a miserable man makes more enemies than friends. Some faults he has fallen into, and a thousand misfortunes; but deep criminality is what he stands accused of, and they that are *not* without sin cast the first stone at him! For is he not a well-wisher to the French Revolution, a Jacobin, and therefore in that one act guilty of all? These accusations, political and moral, it has since appeared, were false enough: but the world hesitated little to credit them. Nay, his convivial Mæcenases themselves were not the last to do it. There is reason to believe that, in his later years, the Dumfries Aristocracy had partly withdrawn themselves from Burns, as from a tainted person no longer worthy of their acquaintance. That painful class, stationed, in all provincial cities, behind the outmost breastwork of Gentility, there to stand siege and do battle against the intrusions of Grocerdom and Grazierdom, had actually seen dishonor in the society of Burns, and branded him with their veto; had, as we vulgarly say, *cut* him! We find one passage in this Work of Mr. Lockhart's, which will not out of our thoughts:

'A gentleman of that county, whose name I have already more than once had occasion to refer to, has often told me that he was seldom

more grieved than when, riding into Dumfries one fine summer evening about this time to attend a county ball, he saw Burns walking alone, on the shady side of the principal street of the town, while the opposite side was gay with successive groups of gentlemen and ladies, all drawn together for the festivities of the night, not one of whom appeared willing to recognize him. The horseman dismounted, and joined Burns, who on his proposing to cross the street said: "Nay, nay, my young friend, that's all over now;" and quoted, after a pause, some verses of Lady Grizzel Baillie's pathetic ballad:

> "His bonnet stood ance fu' fair on his brow,
> His auld ane look'd better than mony ane's new;
> But now he lets 't wear ony way it will hing,
> And casts himsel dowie upon the corn-bing.
>
> O, were we young as we ance hae been,
> We suld hae been galloping down on yon green,
> And linking it ower the lily-white lea!
> *And werena my heart light, I wad die.*"

It was little in Burns's character to let his feelings on certain subjects escape in this fashion. He, immediately after reciting these verses, assumed the sprightliness of his most pleasing manner; and taking his young friend home with him, entertained him very agreeably till the hour of the ball arrived.'

Alas! when we think that Burns now sleeps 'where bitter indignation can no longer lacerate his heart,'* and that most of those fair dames and frizzled gentlemen already lie at his side, where the breastwork of gentility is quite thrown down, — who would not sigh over the thin delusions and foolish toys that divide heart from heart, and make man unmerciful to his brother!

It was not now to be hoped that the genius of Burns would ever reach maturity, or accomplish aught worthy of itself. His spirit was jarred in its melody; not the soft breath of natural feeling, but the rude hand of Fate, was now sweeping over the strings. And yet what harmony was in him, what music even in his discords! How

* *Ubi sæva indignatio cor ulterius lacerare nequit.* Swift's Epitaph.

the wild tones had a charm for the simplest and the wisest; and all men felt and knew that here also was one of the Gifted! 'If he entered an inn at midnight, after all the inmates were in bed, the news of his arrival circulated from the cellar to the garret; and ere ten minutes had elapsed, the landlord and all his guests were assembled!' Some brief pure moments of poetic life were yet appointed him, in the composition of his Songs. We can understand how he grasped at this employment; and how too, he spurned all other reward for it but what the labor itself brought him. For the soul of Burns, though scathed and marred, was yet living in its full moral strength, though sharply conscious of its errors and abasement: and here, in his destitution and degradation, was one act of seeming nobleness and self-devotedness left even for him to perform. He felt too, that with all the 'thoughtless follies' that had 'laid him low,' the world was unjust and cruel to him; and he silently appealed to another and calmer time. Not as a hired soldier, but as a patriot, would he strive for the glory of his country: so he cast from him the poor sixpence a-day, and served zealously as a volunteer. Let us not grudge him this last luxury of his existence; let him not have appealed to us in vain! The money was not necessary to him; he struggled through without it: long since, these guineas would have been gone; and now the high-mindedness of refusing them will plead for him in all hearts forever.

We are here arrived at the crisis of Burns's life; for matters had now taken such a shape with him as could not long continue. If improvement was not to be looked for, Nature could only for a limited time maintain this dark and maddening warfare against the world and itself. We are not medically informed whether any continuance of years was, at this period, probable for Burns; whether his death is to be looked on as in some sense an accidental

event, or only as the natural consequence of the long series of events that had preceded. The latter seems to be the likelier opinion; and yet it is by no means a certain one. At all events, as we have said, *some* change could not be very distant. Three gates of deliverance, it seems to us, were open for Burns: clear poetical activity; madness; or death. The first, with longer life, was still possible, though not probable; for physical causes were beginning to be concerned in it: and yet Burns had an iron resolution; could he but have seen and felt, that not only his highest glory, but his first duty, and the true medicine for all his woes, lay here. The second was still less probable; for his mind was ever among the clearest and firmest. So the milder third gate was opened for him: and he passed, not softly, yet speedily, into that still country where the hail-storms and fire-showers do not reach, and the heaviest-laden wayfarer at length lays down his load!

Contemplating this sad end of Burns, and how he sank unaided by any real help, uncheered by any wise sympathy, generous minds have sometimes figured to themselves, with a reproachful sorrow, that much might have been done for him; that by counsel, true affection, and friendly ministrations, he might have been saved to himself and the world. We question whether there is not more tenderness of heart than soundness of judgment in these suggestions. It seems dubious to us whether the richest, wisest, most benevolent individual could have lent Burns any effectual help. Counsel, which seldom profits any one, he did not need; in his understanding, he knew the right from the wrong, as well perhaps as any man ever did; but the persuasion which would have availed him, lies not so much in the head as in the heart, where no argument or expostulation could have assisted much to implant it. As to money again, we do not believe that this was his essential want;

or well see how any private man could, even presupposing Burns's consent, have bestowed on him an independent fortune, with much prospect of decisive advantage. It is a mortifying truth, that two men, in any rank of society, could hardly be found virtuous enough to give money, and to take it as a necessary gift, without injury to the moral entireness of one or both. But so stands the fact: Friendship, in the old heroic sense of that term, no longer exists; except in the cases of kindred or other legal affinity, it is in reality no longer expected, or recognized as a virtue among men. A close observer of manners has pronounced 'Patronage,' that is, pecuniary or other economic furtherance, to be 'twice cursed;' cursing him that gives, and him that takes! And thus, in regard to outward matters also it has become the rule, as in regard to inward it always was and must be the rule, that no one shall look for effectual help to another; but that each shall rest contented with what help he can afford himself. Such, we say, is the principle of modern Honor; naturally enough growing out of that sentiment of Pride, which we inculcate and encourage as the basis of our whole social morality. Many a poet has been poorer than Burns; but no one was ever prouder: we may question whether, without great precautions, even a pension from Royalty would not have galled and encumbered, more than actually assisted him.

Still less, therefore, are we disposed to join with another class of Burns's admirers, who accuse the higher ranks among us of having ruined Burns by their selfish neglect of him. We have already stated our doubts whether direct pecuniary help, had it been offered, would have been accepted, or could have proved very effectual. We shall readily admit, however, that much was to be done for Burns; that many a poisoned arrow might have been warded from his bosom; many an entanglement in his path, cut asunder by the hand of the powerful; and light

and heat, shed on him from high places, would have made his humble atmosphere more genial; and the softest heart then breathing might have lived and died with some fewer pangs. Nay, we shall grant farther, and for Burns it is granting much, that, with all his pride, he would have thanked, even with exaggerated gratitude, any one who had cordially befriended him: patronage, unless once cursed, needed not to have been twice so. At all events, the poor promotion he desired in his calling might have been granted: it was his own scheme, therefore likelier than any other to be of service. All this it might have been a luxury, nay, it was a duty, for our nobility to have done. No part of all this, however, did any of them do; or apparently attempt, or wish to do: so much is granted against them. But what then is the amount of their blame? Simply that they were men of the world, and walked by the principles of such men; that they treated Burns, as other nobles and other commoners had done other poets; as the English did Shakspeare; as King Charles and his Cavaliers did Butler, as King Philip and his Grandees did Cervantes. Do men gather grapes of thorns; or shall we cut down our thorns for yielding only a *fence* and haws? How, indeed, could the 'nobility and gentry of his native land' hold out any help to this 'Scottish Bard, proud of his name and country'? Were the nobility and gentry so much as able rightly to help themselves? Had they not their game to preserve; their borough interests to strengthen; dinners, therefore, of various kinds to eat and give? Were their means more than adequate to all this business, or less than adequate? Less than adequate, in general; few of them in reality were richer than Burns; many of them were poorer; for sometimes they had to wring their supplies, as with thumbscrews, from the hard hand, and, in their need of guineas, to forget their duty of mercy: which Burns was never

reduced to do. Let us pity and forgive them. The game they preserved and shot, the dinners they ate and gave, the borough interests they strengthened, the *little* Babylons they severally builded by the glory of their might, are all melted or melting back into the primeval Chaos, as man's merely selfish endeavors are fated to do: and here was an action, extending, in virtue of its worldly influence, we may say, through all time; in virtue of its moral nature, beyond all time, being immortal as the Spirit of Goodness itself; this action was offered them to do, and light was not given them to do it. Let us pity and forgive them. But better than pity, let us go and *do otherwise.* Human suffering did not end with the life of Burns; neither was the solemn mandate, 'Love one another, bear one another's burdens,' given to the rich only, but to all men. True, we shall find no Burns to relieve, to assuage by our aid or our pity; but celestial natures, groaning under the fardels of a weary life, we shall still find; and that wretchedness which Fate has rendered *voiceless* and *tuneless,* is not the least wretched, but the most.

Still, we do not think that the blame of Burns's failure lies chiefly with the world. The world, it seems to us, treated him with more, rather than with less, kindness than it usually shows to such men. It has ever, we fear, shown but small favor to its Teachers: hunger and nakedness, perils and revilings, the prison, the cross, the poison-chalice, have, in most times and countries, been the market-price it has offered for Wisdom, the welcome with which it has greeted those who have come to enlighten and purify. Homer and Socrates, and the Christian Apostles, belong to old days; but the world's Martyrology was not completed with these. Roger Bacon and Galileo languish in priestly dungeons; Tasso pines in the cell of a madhouse; Camoens dies begging on the streets of Lisbon. So neglected, so 'persecuted they the Prophets,' not in Judea only, but in all

places where men have been. We reckon that every poet of Burns's order is, or should be, a prophet and teacher to his age; that he has no right to expect great kindness from it, but rather is bound to do it great kindness; that Burns, in particular, experienced fully the usual proportion of the world's goodness; and that the blame of his failure, as we have said, lies not chiefly with the world.

Where, then, does it lie? We are forced to answer: With himself; it is his inward, not his outward, misfortunes that bring him to the dust. Seldom, indeed, is it otherwise; seldom is a life morally wrecked but the grand cause lies in some internal mal-arrangement, some want less of good fortune than of good guidance. Nature fashions no creature without implanting in it the strength needful for its action and duration; least of all does she so neglect her masterpiece and darling, the poetic soul. Neither can we believe that it is in the power of *any* external circumstances utterly to ruin the mind of a man; nay, if proper wisdom be given him, even so much as to affect its essential health and beauty. The sternest sum-total of all worldly misfortunes is Death; nothing more *can* lie in the cup of human woe: yet many men, in all ages, have triumphed over Death, and led it captive; converting its physical victory into a moral victory for themselves, into a seal and immortal consecration for all that their past life had achieved. What has been done, may be done again: nay, it is but the degree and not the kind of such heroism that differs in different seasons; for without some portion of this spirit, not of boisterous daring, but of silent fearlessness, of Self-denial in all its forms, no good man, in any scene or time, has ever attained to be good.

We have already stated the error of Burns; and mourned over it, rather than blamed it. It was the want of unity in his purposes, of consistency in his aims; the hapless attempt to mingle in friendly union the common spirit of the world

with the spirit of poetry, which is of a far different and altogether irreconcilable nature. Burns was nothing wholly; and Burns could be nothing, no man formed as he was can be anything, by halves. The heart, not of a mere hot-blooded, popular Versemonger, or poetical *Restaurateur*, but of a true Poet and Singer, worthy of the old religious heroic times, had been given him: and he fell in an age, not of heroism and religion, but of scepticism, selfishness, and triviality, when true Nobleness was little understood, and its place supplied by a hollow, dissocial, altogether barren and unfruitful principle of Pride. The influences of that age, his open, kind, susceptible nature, to say nothing of his highly untoward situation, made it more than usually difficult for him to cast aside, or rightly subordinate; the better spirit that was within him ever sternly demanded its rights, its supremacy: he spent his life in endeavoring to reconcile these two; and lost it, as he must lose it, without reconciling them.

Burns was born poor; and born also to continue poor, for he would not endeavor to be otherwise: this it had been well could he have once for all admitted, and considered as finally settled. He was poor, truly; but hundreds even of his own class and order of minds have been poorer, yet have suffered nothing deadly from it: nay, his own Father had a far sorer battle with ungrateful destiny than his was; and he did not yield to it, but died courageously warring, and to all moral intents prevailing, against it. True, Burns had little means, had even little time for poetry, his only real pursuit and vocation; but so much the more precious was what little he had. In all these external respects his case was hard; but very far from the hardest. Poverty, incessant drudgery, and much worse evils, it has often been the lot of Poets and wise men to strive with, and their glory to conquer. Locke was banished as a traitor; and wrote his *Essay on the Human Understanding* sheltering himself in a Dutch garret. Was Milton rich or at his ease when he com-

posed *Paradise Lost?* Not only low, but fallen from a height; not only poor, but impoverished; in darkness and with dangers compassed round, he sang his immortal song, and found fit audience, though few. Did not Cervantes finish his work, a maimed soldier and in prison? Nay, was not the *Araucana*, which Spain acknowledges as its Epic, written without even the aid of a paper; on scraps of leather, as the stout fighter and voyager snatched any moment from that wild warfare?

And what, then, had these men, which Burns wanted? Two things; both which, it seems to us, are indispensable for such men. They had a true, religious principle of morals; and a single, not a double aim in their activity. They were not self-seekers and self-worshipers; but seekers and worshipers of something far better than Self. Not personal enjoyment was their object; but a high, heroic idea of Religion, of Patriotism, of heavenly Wisdom, in one or the other form, ever hovered before them; in which cause they neither shrank from suffering, nor called on the earth to witness it as something wonderful; but patiently endured, counting it blessedness enough so to spend and be spent. Thus the 'golden-calf of Self-love,' however curiously carved, was not their Deity; but the Invisible Goodness, which alone is man's reasonable service. This feeling was as a celestial fountain, whose streams refreshed into gladness and beauty all the provinces of their otherwise too desolate existence. In a word, they willed one thing, to which all other things were subordinated and made subservient; and therefore they accomplished it. The wedge will rend rocks; but its edge must be sharp and single: if it be double, the wedge is bruised in pieces, and will rend nothing.

Part of this superiority these men owed to their age; in which heroism and devotedness were still practised, or at least not yet disbelieved in; but much of it likewise they owed to themselves. With Burns, again, it was different. His

morality, in most of its practical points, is that of a mere worldly man; enjoyment, in a finer or coarser shape, is the only thing he longs and strives for. A noble instinct sometimes raises him above this; but an instinct only, and acting only for moments. He has no Religion; in the shallow age wherein his days were cast, Religion was not discriminated from the New and Old Light *forms* of Religion; and was, with these, becoming obsolete in the minds of men. His heart, indeed, is alive with a trembling adoration, but there is no temple in his understanding. He lives in darkness and in the shadow of doubt. His religion, at best, is an anxious wish; like that of Rabelais, 'a great Perhaps.'

He loved Poetry warmly, and in his heart; could he but have loved it purely, and with his whole undivided heart, it had been well. For Poetry, as Burns could have followed it, is but another form of Wisdom, of Religion; is itself Wisdom and Religion. But this also was denied him. His poetry is a stray vagrant gleam, which will not be extinguished within him, yet rises not to be the true light of his path, but is often a wildfire that misleads him. It was not necessary for Burns to be rich; to be, or to seem, 'independent:' but it *was* necessary for him to be at one with his own heart; to place what was highest in his nature highest also in his life: 'to seek within himself for that consistency and sequence, which external events would forever refuse him.' He was born a poet; poetry was the celestial element of his being, and should have been the soul of his whole endeavors. Lifted into that serene ether, whither he had wings given him to mount, he would have needed no other elevation: poverty, neglect, and all evil save the desecration of himself and his Art, were a small matter to him; the pride and the passions of the world lay far beneath his feet; and he looked down alike on noble and slave, on prince and beggar, and all that wore the stamp of man, with clear recognition, with brotherly affection, with sympathy.

with pity. Nay, we question whether, for his culture as a Poet, poverty and much suffering for a season were not absolutely advantageous. Great men, in looking back over their lives, have testified to that effect. 'I would not for much,' says Jean Paul, 'that I had been born richer.' And yet Paul's birth was poor enough; for, in another place, he adds: 'The prisoner's allowance is bread and water; and I had often only the latter.' But the gold that is refined in the hottest furnace comes out the purest; or, as he has himself expressed it, 'the canary-bird sings sweeter the longer it has been trained in a darkened cage.'

A man like Burns might have divided his hours between poetry and virtuous industry; industry which all true feeling sanctions, nay, prescribes, and which has a beauty, for that cause, beyond the pomp of thrones: but to divide his hours between poetry and rich men's banquets was an ill-tarred and inauspicious attempt. How could he be at ease at such banquets? What had he to do there, mingling his music with the coarse roar of altogether earthly voices; brightening the thick smoke of intoxication with fire lent him from heaven? Was it his aim to *enjoy* life? Tomorrow he must go drudge as an Exciseman! We wonder not that Burns became moody, indignant, and at times an offender against certain rules of society; but rather that he did not grow utterly frantic, and run *amuck* against them all. How could a man, so falsely placed, by his own or others' fault, ever know contentment or peaceable diligence for an hour? What he did, under such perverse guidance, and what he forbore to do, alike fill us with astonishment at the natural strength and worth of his character.

Doubtless there was a remedy for this perverseness; but not in others; only in himself; least of all in simple increase of wealth and worldly 'respectability.' We hope we have now heard enough about the efficacy of wealth for poetry, and to make poets happy. Nay, have we not seen another

instance of it in these very days? Byron, a man of an endowment considerably less ethereal than that of Burns, is born in the rank not of a Scottish ploughman, but of an English peer: the highest worldly honors, the fairest worldly career, are his by inheritance; the richest harvest of fame he soon reaps, in another province, by his own hand. And what does all this avail him? Is he happy, is he good, is he true? Alas, he has a poet's soul, and strives towards the Infinite and the Eternal; and soon feels that all this is but mounting to the house-top to reach the stars! Like Burns, he is only a proud man; might, like him, have 'purchased a pocket-copy of Milton to study the character of Satan;' for Satan also is Byron's grand exemplar, the hero of his poetry, and the model apparently of his conduct. As in Burns's case, too, the celestial element will not mingle with the clay of earth; both poet and man of the world he must not be; vulgar Ambition will not live kindly with poetic Adoration; he *cannot* serve God and Mammon. Byron, like Burns, is not happy; nay, he is the most wretched of all men. His life is falsely arranged: the fire that is in him is not a strong, still, central fire, warming into beauty the products of a world; but it is the mad fire of a volcano; and now — we look sadly into the ashes of a crater, which ere long will fill itself with snow!

Byron and Burns were sent forth as missionaries to their generation, to teach it a higher Doctrine, a purer Truth; they had a message to deliver, which left them no rest till it was accomplished; in dim throes of pain, this divine behest lay smouldering within them; for they knew not what it meant, and felt it only in mysterious anticipation; and they had to die without articulately uttering it. They are in the camp of the Unconverted; yet not as high messengers of rigorous though benignant truth, but as soft flattering singers, and in pleasant fellowship, will they live there: they are first adulated, then persecuted; they accomplish little for

others; they find no peace for themselves, but only death and the peace of the grave. We confess, it is not without a certain mournful awe that we view the fate of these noble souls, so richly gifted, yet ruined to so little purpose with all their gifts. It seems to us there is a stern moral taught in this piece o history,—*twice* told us in our own time! Surely to men of like genius, if there be any such, it carries with it a lesson of deep, impressive significance. Surely it would become such a man, furnished for the highest of all enterprises, that of being e Poet of his Age, to consider well what it is that he attempts, and in what spirit he attempts it. For the words of Milton are true in all times, and were never truer than in this: 'He who would write heroic poems must make his whole life a heroic poem.' If he cannot first make his life, then let him hasten from this arena; for neither its lofty glories, nor its fearful perils, are for him. Let him dwindle into a modish balladmonger; let him worship and besing the idols of the time, and the time will not fail to reward him. If, indeed, he can endure to live in that capacity! Byron and Burns could not live as idol-priests, but the fire of their own hearts consumed them; and better it was for them that they could not. For it is not in the favor of the great or of the small, but in a life of truth, and in the inexpugnable citadel of his own soul, that a Byron's or a Burns's strength must lie. Let the great stand aloof from him, or know how to reverence him. Beautiful is the union of wealth with favor and furtherance for literature; like the costliest flower-jar enclosing the loveliest amaranth. Yet let not the relation be mistaken. A true poet is not one whom they can hire by money or flattery to be a minister of their pleasures, their writer of occasional verses, their purveyor of table-wit; he cannot be their menial, he cannot even be their partisan. At the peril of both parties, let no such union be attempted! Will a Courser of the Sun work softly in the harness of a Dray-

horse? His hoofs are of fire, and his path is through the heavens, bringing light to all lands; will he lumber on mud highways, dragging ale for earthly appetites from door to door?

But we must stop short in these considerations, which would lead us to boundless lengths. We had something to say on the public moral character of Burns; but this also we must forbear. We are far from regarding him as guilty before the world, as guiltier than the average; nay, from doubting that he is less guilty than one of ten thousand. Tried at a tribunal far more rigid than that where the *Plebiscita* of common civic reputations ar pronounced, he has seemed to us even there less worthy of blame than of pity and wonder. But the world is habitually unjust in its judgments of such men; unjust on many grounds, of which this one may be stated as the substance: It decides, like a court of law, by dead statutes; and not positively but negatively, less on what is done right, than on what is or is not done wrong. Not the few inches of deflection from the mathematical orbit, which are so easily measured, but the *ratio* of these to the whole diameter, constitutes the real aberration. This orbit may be a planet's, its diameter the breadth of the solar system; or it may be a city hippodrome; nay, the circle of a ginhorse, its diameter a score of feet or paces. But the inches of deflection only are measured: and it is assumed that the diameter of the ginhorse, and that of the planet, will yield the same ratio when compared with them! Here lies the root of many a blind, cruel condemnation of Burnses, Swifts, Rousseaus, which one never listens to with approval. Granted, the ship comes into harbor with shrouds and tackle damaged; the pilot is blameworthy; he has not been all-wise and all-powerful: but to know *how* blameworthy, tell us first whether his voyage has been round the Globe, or only to Ramsgate and the Isle of Dogs.

With our readers in general, with men of right feeling anywhere, we are not required to plead for Burns. In pitying admiration he lies enshrined in all our hearts, in a far nobler mausoleum than that one of marble; neither will his Works, even as they are, pass away from the memory of men. While the Shakspeares and Miltons roll on like mighty rivers through the country of Thought, bearing fleets of traffickers and assiduous pearl-fishers on their waves; this little Valclusa Fountain will also arrest our eye: for this also is of Nature's own and most cunning workmanship, bursts from the depths of the earth, with a full gushing current, into the light of day; and often will the traveler turn aside to drink of its clear waters, and muse among its rocks and pines!

NOTES

ESSAY ON BURNS.

Edinburgh Review, No. 96. — *The Life of Robert Burns.* By J. G. Lockhart, LL.B. Edinburgh, 1828.

'Lockhart has written a kind of "Life of Burns," ' wrote Carlyle to his brother in 1828, 'and men in general are making another uproar about Burns. It is this book, a trivial one enough, which I am to *pretend* reviewing.'

The famous Edinburgh quarterly, professing by its title to deal mainly in book-reviewing, could never have been the power it was if it had held itself strictly to so narrow a field. That the relation of much of its best work to the literature of the moment was merely nominal is shown not only by this paper but by many of Macaulay's best biographical and historical essays, notably *Milton*, *Addison*, and *Lord Clive*. Jeffrey, at that time editor of the *Review*, was of an easy and cultivated talent, but, like Macaulay, he was too much a man of the world, and too little a seer, to relish unconventionality of any sort. He owned, indeed, in his relationship and attachment to Mrs. Carlyle, a special motive for encouraging her husband, and had admitted to his columns, in 1827, the essay on *Richter* and *German Literature*. These papers, as Carlyle said long after, 'excited a considerable though questionable sensation in Edinburgh;' but mainly on the score of their subject and general mode of treatment, for the young author had not yet freed himself wholly from the conventional manner of the reviewer of that day. When, however, Jeffrey came to examine the manuscript of the Burns essay, he found it so different in method and style from anything he or his friends could or would have written in the circumstances that he declined to accept it without modification. He talked about its diffuseness, its unevenness of diction; stipulated that it be abridged one-half; and before sending the manuscript to the printer made many 'corrections,' and even insertions, with a

view to mitigating the 'verbosity and exaggeration' which he deplored. Carlyle received the proof-sheets, and saw 'the first part cut all into shreds — the body of a quadruped with the head of a bird; a man shortened by cutting out the thighs and fixing the knee-caps on his hips.' He wrote at once to Jeffrey, refusing to let his work appear in any such mangled form. The portions which had been cut out were in the main replaced, and the essay now stands, we suppose, approximately as it was first written. Not more than approximately, it is clear; the first part, in particular, still shows signs of those 'editorial blotches' in the interest of conventional propriety, which Carlyle years later plaintively named to Emerson as characteristic of the *Edinburgh Review* in Jeffrey's time. The style of the essay, as Carlyle originally wrote it, is less fanciful and involved than his later writing; so that it is a good piece of work for the reader to begin with.

'It is one of the very best of his essays,' says Froude, 'and was composed with an evidently peculiar interest, because the outward circumstances of Burns's life, his origin, his early surroundings, his situation as a man of genius born in a farmhouse not many miles distant, among the same people and the same associations as were so familiar to himself, could not fail to make him think often of himself while he was writing about his countryman.'

(The dates given in these Notes are not for memorization, but simply to help the student 'place' the persons and events mentioned, as to their general period and significance.)

Page 1. **like Butler.** Samuel Butler (1612–1680). The fact that *Hudibras* was one of Carlyle's favorite books, in his early days, accounts for the double allusion to its author in the limits of a single essay (see p. 55). To most modern readers one of the dullest, though certainly in its production the most timely, of satires, *Hudibras* won great applause from the fickle Charles and his court; yet Butler was suffered to die in wretched obscurity, while his work was still in everybody's mouth. — An interesting early office of his was the stewardship of Ludlow Castle, which he held just after the Restoration, when the neighborhood must have been still fruitful in memories of the presentation of Milton's *Comus*.

Carlyle may have had a sort of grim pun in mind in his 'bread and stone' phrase — thinking of the stone monuments the world gave both Butler and Burns, after having starved them to death.

The inventor of a spinning-jenny, etc. Carlyle means that the maker of something practical is likely to get a quicker reward than

an artist. But this is not always true of inventors; and in fact the inventor of the spinning-jenny, James Hargreaves, had his patents stolen and died poor.

brave Mausoleum. Compare the French *brave*. Carlyle no doubt uses the adjective ironically. This tomb, which stands in the Dumfries churchyard, is an ugly affair, with a tin dome that literally 'shines over his dust.'

sixth narrative. The biographies by Currie, Walker, Cromek, Heron, and Peterkin are perhaps those Carlyle had in mind, though other accounts of Burns, most of them on a small scale, preceded Lockhart's.

might yet have been living. When this essay was written (1828) Burns, if he had lived, would have been not quite seventy.

Mr. Lockhart. John Gibson Lockhart (1794–1854). Son-in-law and chief biographer of Sir Walter Scott.

P. 2. **No man . . . is a hero to his valet.** This saying has been attributed not only to several French sources, among them Madame de Sévigné, but even, in a modified form, to Plutarch. Here Carlyle gives it the turn of 'A prophet hath no honor in his own country.'

Sir Thomas Lucy . . . John a Combe. Stratford worthies whose names are connected by tradition with Shakespeare and certain doggerel verses ascribed to the poet. According to the legend, Sir Thomas Lucy prosecuted young Shakespeare for stealing a deer from his park at Charlcote, near Stratford, and Shakespeare 'got back at him' by posting an insulting ballad on Charlcote gates. John-a-Combe was a rich money-lender of Stratford, on whom, while alive, Shakespeare is said to have written a comic epitaph. It was not flattering, but John-a-Combe left Shakespeare, then a prosperous citizen, a substantial legacy. His tomb is near Shakespeare's, in Stratford Church.

Christian bowels. The ancients believed the bowels were the seat of mercy, as the liver was the seat of the passions. 'Bowels of mercy,' or 'of compassion' are phrases to be found in the New Testament and in English frequently after the publication of the King James version of the Bible (1611).

Excise Commissioners. We should say, Commissioners of Internal Revenue.

The Gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt, according to Lockhart, were 'an association of the most distinguished members of the northern aristocracy.' Carlyle's respect is ironical. He had a keen contempt for the class which made a religion of hunting and

'preserving' game. To the Caledonian Hunt Burns dedicated the first Edinburgh edition of his poems.

Ayr Writers. Lawyers, or legal agents. Sir Walter Scott's father was a "writer to the signet."

New and Old Light Clergy. The progressive 'New Lights,' with whom Burns became identified, were in open rebellion against the 'Old Lights,' the conservative element in the Scottish Church, whom Burns attacked in *The Twa Herds*, *Holy Willie's Prayer*, *The Holy Fair* (note on p. 18), etc. For a more gracious picture, see Barrie's *Auld Licht Idylls* and *Window in Thrums*.

P. 4. **Constable's Miscellany.** Archibald Constable was the Edinburgh publisher who founded the *Edinburgh Review* and launched the Waverley Novels. The reading public was not then large enough to make publishing a safe business. Constable's failure involved Scott and put a great burden on his later years. *Constable's Miscellany* was almost a first attempt to give English readers a series of good books at reasonable prices.

so clear, direct, and nervous. Nervous in the older sense — 'sinewy.' So Shakespeare says 'nerves of the Nemean lion.'

Mr. Morris Birkbeck. Author of *Notes on a Journey in America* (1818).

backwoods of America. This from Carlyle means simply America. He repeatedly speaks to Emerson of a possible visit to Concord as a journey to 'the Western Woods.'

Our notions upon this subject may perhaps appear extravagant. — P. 5. **Our own contributions . . . scanty and feeble.** These and other moderate, even apologetic phrases, as well as the numerous repetitions of 'as we believe,' 'we think,' etc., which occur in the first part of this essay, are evidently the remnants of Jeffrey's 'editing.' Certainly there is nothing of the sort to be found in Carlyle's later work.

P. 6. **without instruction, without model.** See *Introduction*, p. xix.

a Ferguson or Ramsay. It is hard to understand Carlyle's contemptuous allusion to these two. They were Burns's direct predecessors and masters in the writing of Scottish verse. He owed almost everything to them but his genius, and he eagerly acknowledged the debt. He put up a stone to Ferguson's neglected grave in Canongate churchyard, Edinburgh; and reverently visited the shop that had once been Ramsay's.

Allan Ramsay (1686–1758) was a poor country boy who became a wigmaker in Edinburgh, and later a bookseller, collected old Scotch

Alloway Kirk, Ayr.

poems, and wrote much himself in the lowland dialect. He became famous and lived to a prosperous old age. Robert Ferguson (1750–1774) was more directly Burns's master. He was a lawyer's clerk in Edinburgh, without much physical stamina or moral control, but with a vein of genius which was just beginning to find its outlet in the use of the Scotch tongue when his body and mind gave way, and he died in a madhouse. Robert Louis Stevenson wrote, 'Whoever puts Ferguson right with fame cannot do better than dedicate his labor to the memory of Burns, who will be the best delighted of the dead.' For Burns's full debt to him, see *Introduction*, pp. xix–xx.

darksome drudging childhood. Burns says that his early life combined 'the cheerless gloom of a hermit with the unceasing moil of a galley-slave.'

Alas, his sun shone as through a tropical tornado, etc. Here follows one of those almost lyrical bursts which now and then surprise us in what Carlyle calls his 'crabbed sardonic vein.'

P. 7. **advised to write a tragedy.** Burns himself had serious thoughts of turning to dramatic work. See Lockhart's *Life of Burns*, pp. 211, 317.

'amid the melancholy main.' Quoted from Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*, stanza 30.

Sir Hudson Lowe. Governor of the island of St. Helena, where Napoleon was imprisoned after his downfall.

'Eternal Melodies.' The influence of Carlyle's German studies is evident not only in his syntax, but in the familiar use of words and phrases translated or imitated from the German. In a letter to Emerson (1837) occurs the following passage: 'I rejoice much in the glad serenity with which you look out on this wondrous Dwelling-place of yours and mine, — with an ear for the *Ewigen Melodien*, which pipe in the winds around us, and utter themselves forth in all sounds and sights and things: *not* to be written-down by gamut-machinery.'

making man's life more venerable. More to be revered.

P. 8. **the 'Daisy,'** etc. The following lines allude to the poems *To a Mountain Daisy*, *To a Mouse*, and *A Winter Night*, all of which may be found in the *Appendix*.

'it raises his thoughts,' etc. Burns says something like this in his Journal (1784). There is no poem which is likely to appeal more strongly to the imagination of any poet, Old Light or New, than the noble 104th Psalm, from which Burns quotes.

P. 9. **for defence, not for offence.** This sort of pride, which Carlyle again praises in Johnson, was one of his own marked characteristics. In 1824, when he was still without profession or favorable prospect, he wrote: 'If it were but a crust of bread and a cup of water that Heaven has given thee, rejoice that thou hast none but Heaven to thank for it. A man that is not standing on his own feet soon ceases to be a man at all.'

P. 10. **'a soul like an Aeolian harp.'** A favorite figure of speech with Carlyle's oft-quoted 'Jean Paul.' For a similar use, see Carlyle's first essay on *Richter:* 'a wild music as of wind-harps,' etc.

no fitter business, etc. Though Burns made some fun of himself as an official, he seems to have taken the job of 'gauger' quite of his own choice.

occasional effusions. Poems inspired by special occasions or incidents.

P. 11. **Horace's rule.**

Si vis me flere, dolendum est
Primum ipsi tibi. — Ars Poetica, 102.

Freely rendered: 'If you would have me in tears, first must you yourself know sorrow.'

P. 12. **practical appliance.** Practical application.

Byron. George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788–1824).

his Harolds and Giaours . . . Don Juan. Childe Harold, The Giaour, and Don Juan are long narratives in verse, partly satirical, partly romantic.

P. 13. **sulphurous humor.** Diabolic mood.

this vice. The vice of insincerity.

the only thing approaching to a sincere work. For a different estimate read Matthew Arnold's essay on *Byron.* You will note that his final judgment is founded upon the following proposition quoted from Swinburne: 'The power of Byron's personality lies in the "splendid and imperishable excellence which covers all his offences, and outweighs all his defects; the excellence of sincerity and strength."'

to read its own consciousness, etc. We need to keep this passage in mind in reading (p. 36) that Burns 'never attains to any clearness regarding himself'; and to decide which of these opinions is more consistent with the final comparison of Burns and Byron, at the close of the essay.

P. 14. **letters to Mrs. Dunlop are uniformly excellent.** Even in Carlyle's youth the fashion of British letter-writing was formal. Only in writing to men of his own station has Burns the excellence of unconscious ease. See Lockhart's *Life* for numerous extracts from letters of Burns to Mrs. Dunlop. He himself said of his English: 'I have not that command of the language that I have of my native tongue; in fact, I think my ideas are more barren in English than in Scottish.'

rose-colored Novels and iron-mailed Epics. At this time Scott and Cooper were at the height of their fame; Byron was not long dead, and Southey, in his poetry still more remote from the representation of real life, had been for fifteen years poet-laureate.

P. 16. **Or are men suddenly grown wise,** etc. Johnson records the fact that neither Swift nor Pope ever succumbed to laughter. Lord Chesterfield wrote to his son: 'How low and unbecoming a thing laughter is! I am sure that since I have had the full use of my reason nobody has ever heard me laugh.' Johnson himself, like Carlyle, 'laughed all over,' and used to say that 'the size of a man's understanding might always be measured by his mirth.'

Delphi itself will not make him one. That is, even if he were to dwell at Delphi, the seat of the famous oracle, he could not attain the prophetic powers of a true poet.

The **Minerva Press** was largely responsible for the flood of maudlin sensationalism that debauched the taste of the English novel-reader during the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

P. 17. **Mossgiel and Tarbolton.** The two farms on which the Burns family lived during the years when Burns did much of his best work.

the passions at once of a Borgia and of a Luther. Passions for evil and for good. The Roman Borgias of the fifteenth century were (according to tradition) devotees of vice and crime. Martin Luther (1483–1546) was the great German leader of the Protestant Reformation.

saloons. Compare the French *salon.*

Crockford's. A fashionable gambling club in London.

Tuileries. The royal palace in Paris, burned by the Commune in 1871.

Such cobweb speculations. Three years before this essay on Burns was written, Lord Macaulay had contributed to the *Edinburgh Review* his essay on *Milton.* In it, arguing from Milton's remark that he had been 'born an age too late,' Macaulay makes his famous

generalisation, which Carlyle evidently has in mind here: 'We think that, as civilization advances, poetry almost necessarily declines.'

Wounded Hare. See *Appendix*, p. 91. It is included there as an example of Burns at his most artificial. In his English verse as well as prose, Burns shows often the 'highflown inflated tone,' 'the stilting emphasis' of which Carlyle has spoken (page 13).

Hallowe'en is a poem of some length, in Burns's broadest Scotch, describing the country games and rites of that season.

no Theocritus, till Burns. Theocritus, the Greek poet of pastoral life, third century, B.C. E. C. Stedman says that he 'created his own school, with no models save those obtainable from the popular mimes and catches of his own region; just as Burns, availing himself of the simple Scottish ballads, lifted the poetry of Scotland to an eminent and winsome individuality.' However it may have been with Theocritus, this was not strictly true of Burns. For with Burns, the 'simple ballads' of his land had been treated by earlier bands, Ramsay, Ferguson, and others. (See note on page 6, and *Introduction*, page xix.) More than this, most of his poems were adaptations and improvements of earlier work by others. *Hallowe'en* is based on a poem of the same title by John Mayne. One student of Burns (Professor J. G. Dow) goes so far as to say that 'of his poems hardly any except the two masterpieces, *The Jolly Beggars* and *Tam o' Shanter*, is original in the sense that the first idea and form of it sprung from his own brain; and even the latter of these is not strictly entitled to claim this originality.' That this is not a reflection on Burns's creative genius is made clear by the same writer's generalisation: 'In actual borrowing and imitation his derived work exceeds that of any other great English author except Shakespeare.' This brings up the whole question of the difference between creative originality and mere invention or novelty.

P. 18. **Council of Trent.** A great general council of the Roman Church, A.D. 1545–1563. It was held at Trent, in the Tyrol, shortly before Luther's death, and, with a very different object in view, brought about a final separation between the Protestants and the Papacy.

The **Holy Fair** describes a mock conference of the Old Lights, to which the poet goes by invitation of the merry maid Fun, who promises him — and the promise is kept — much amusement at the expense of the hags Superstition and Hypocrisy.

P. 19. Note that here Carlyle calls **clearness of sight** 'the root and foundation of every sort of talent,' while in another passage (p. 13)

he has said that *sincerity of expression* is 'the root of most other virtues.' A passage in his lecture on *The Hero as Poet* shows how the two statements hang together in his mind: 'Poetic creation, what is this too but *seeing* the thing sufficiently? The *word* that will describe the thing follows of itself from such clear intense sight of the thing.'

the burin of a Retsch. Moritz Retsch (1779–1857). A German painter and etcher, illustrator of Goethe, Schiller, and Shakespeare. A 'burin' is the tool of an engraver.

Winter Night. See *A Winter Night, Appendix*, p. 89.

Auld Brig. The quoted passage is from *The Brigs of Ayr*, a poem of some length written on the occasion of the building of a new bridge across the Ayr. It is really the Auld Brig (old bridge) which prophesies the fall of the new one. For the Scottish words in this and other quotations in the text, see the *Glossary*.

P. 20. **A Poussin-picture of that Deluge.** Nicholas Poussin (1594–1665) was a famous French painter. One of his best-known works was a painting called *The Deluge*.

Farmer . . . Auld Mare. See *The Farmer's New-Year Morning Salutation to His Auld Mare, Maggie, Appendix*, p. 93.

Smithy of the Cyclops. See *Odyssey*, Book IX.

yoking of Priam's Chariot. See *Iliad*, Book XXIV.

Burn-the-wind. Scotch nickname for blacksmith.

Scotch Drink. A poem by Burns in which the blacksmith, 'Burnewin,' is a leading figure.

The pale moon is setting, etc. Incorrectly quoted from Burns's *Open the Door to Me, Oh!* This is the right reading:

> 'The wan moon is setting beyond the white wave,
> And Time is setting wi' me, oh!
> False friends, false love, farewell! for mair
> I'll ne'er trouble them, nor thee, oh!'

Richardson and Defoe. Samuel Richardson (1689–1761) and Daniel Defoe (1661–1731). Pioneers of the English novel.

P. 21. **red-wat-shod.** From the *Epistle to William Simpson.*

> 'At Wallace' name, what Scottish blood
> But boils up in a spring-tide flood!
> Oft have our fearless fathers strode
> By Wallace' side,
> Still pressing onward, red-wat-shod,
> Or glorious died!'

too frightfully accurate for Art! A criticism that may fairly be made of many of Carlyle's own descriptions in *Sartor Resartus* and *The French Revolution.*

such cases as that of Keats. John Keats (1753–1828). Beyond challenge, one of the great English poets. Carlyle's savage judgment of him is based on a radical difference in their genius: Keats worshipped Beauty, while Carlyle worshipped Truth. When the essay appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*, Jeffrey toned down, and indeed quite changed the meaning of, this passage. Carlyle restored it in the collected *Essays.*

P. 22. **Hell of Dante.** Dante Alighieri (1265–1321). The *Inferno* is the first and most famous part of his *Divine Comedy.* The other two parts are: the *Purgatorio* and the *Paradiso.*

might have . . . indited a Novum Organum. Oddly enough, there has been a modern attempt to prove the converse of this: that the author of the *Novum Organum*, Francis Lord Bacon (1561–1626) not only might have, but must have, written the plays called Shakespeare's.

in the passage above quoted. There is nothing about the 'doctrine of association' in the passage quoted (p. 21). Probably it was longer when first printed, was cut for later publication, and Carlyle overlooked this allusion.

P. 23. '**doctrine of association.**' The doctrine that 'ideas or states of mind are so connected one with another that one image in memory will call up another, and this another, so that thought is one continuous stream' (Dracass).

P. 24. **I thought me**, etc. See *A Winter Night, Appendix*, p. 89.

P. 25. **But fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben.** See closing lines of the *Address to the Deil, Appendix*, p. 97.

Dr. Slop . . . my uncle Toby. Characters in the *Tristram Shandy* of Laurence Sterne (1713–1768).

Indignation makes verses. In one of his *Satires* the Roman poet Juvenal says, 'If nature withholds talent, indignation makes verses.'

he loved a good hater. Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709–1784) said of a friend, long dead, 'Dear Bathurst was a man to my very heart's content: he hated a fool, and he hated a rogue, and he hated a Whig, he was a very good hater.'

Dweller in yon Dungeon Dark. It is hard to understand Carlyle's admiration for this poem, which is a good illustration of how stiff and bombastic Burns could be when he used the formal literary

English of the eighteenth century. It is called *Ode Sacred to the Memory of Mrs. Oswald of Auchencruive.* Burns's own amusing account of its origin shows that there was a personal grudge to point his scorn of a very rich and very mean woman:

'In January last (1789), on my road to Ayrshire, I had put up at Bailie Whigham's in Sanquhar, the only tolerable inn in the place. The frost was keen, and the grim evening and howling wind were ushering in a night of snow and drift. My horse and I were both much fatigued with the labors of the day, and just as my friend the Bailie and I were bidding defiance to the storm, over a smoking bowl, in wheels the funeral pageantry of the late great Mrs. Oswald; and poor I am forced to brave all the horrors of a tempestuous night, and jade my horse, my young favorite horse, whom I had just christened Pegasus, twelve miles further on, through the wildest moors and hills of Ayrshire, to New Cumnock, the next inn. The powers of prose and poesy sink under me, when I would describe what I felt. Suffice it to say, that when a good fire at New Cumnock had so far recovered my frozen sinews, I sat down and wrote the enclosed ode.'

Furies of Aeschylus. The Furies play the part of Chorus in the tragedy called *The Eumenides.*

Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled. Burns's famous song, variously known as *Scots Wha Hae, Bruce's Address,* and *Bannockburn.* See *Appendix,* p. 101.

Macpherson's Farewéll. See *Appendix,* p. 102.

Cacus, Nimrod, Napoleon. Carlyle sees Macpherson (who by tradition fiddled the tune of the early version of this song at the gallows, sang it, and broke his fiddle over his knee) as a mighty robber hunter, and warrior — as great a man as he could be in his little world.

P. 27. **At Thebes, and in Pelops' line.** The allusion is to Milton's *Il Penseroso:*

> 'Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
> In sceptered pall come sweeping by,
> Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
> Or the tale of Troy divine.'

Oedipus was King of Thebes; Agamemnon was grandson of Pelops.

P. 28. **Tam o' Shanter.** See *Appendix,* p. 105. Lockhart says in his *Life of Burns* (Chap. VII): 'To the last, Burns was of the opinion that *Tam o' Shanter* was the best of his productions, and

although it does not often happen that poet and public come to the same conclusion on such points, I believe the decision in question has been all but unanimously approved of.'

Tieck . . . Musäus. Ludwig Tieck (1773–1853) and Johann Musäus (1735–1787). Both writers are represented in Carlyle's early translations from the German. Both dealt largely with the materials of folklore. Carlyle says of Musäus: 'He does not approach the first rank of writers; he attempts not to deal with the deeper feelings of the heart. . . . Musäus is in fact no poet . . . he is nothing or very little of a maker.' On the other hand, 'Tieck is no ordinary man; he is a true poet, a poet born as well as made.'

P. 29. **The Jolly Beggars.** A long descriptive poem suggested by a carouse Burns once found going on in a squalid inn near home. 'Poosie-Nansie's' ale-house was a real place. The *raucle carlin* (sturdy crone) and other figures here mentioned are brought out vividly in the poem.

Teniers. David Teniers (1610–1694). A Dutch painter of 'low life.'

P. 30. **Beggars' Opera.** A comic opera by John Gay (1685–1732), which was not only very successful in its own day, but has been recently 'revived' with success on the modern stage.

Beggars' Bush. A seventeenth century play, perhaps by Beaumont and Fletcher.

Ossorius, the Portugal Bishop. Jeronymo Osorio, once affectedly called the 'Cicero of Portugal.' It was Lord Bacon who said that 'his vein was weak and waterish.'

P. 31. **his Songs are music.** See Carlyle's discussion of Song in *The Hero as Poet.* Burns's old schoolmaster says: 'Robert's ear was remarkably dull, and his voice untunable. It was long before I could get him to distinguish one tune from another.' This is remarkable, as according to Burns's own testimony the origin of nearly all his songs was *in* music. See *Introduction*, p. xx.

P. 32. **Our Fletcher.** Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun (1653–1716).

Our Grays and Glovers. The famous *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* of Thomas Gray (1716–1771) is 'steeped in England,' says Stopford Brooke. It is odd that Carlyle should mention Richard Glover (1712–1785), a long-forgotten verse-maker, beside Gray.

Goldsmith. The *Vicar of Wakefield* and *Deserted Village* of Oliver Goldsmith (1728–1774) are thoroughly British in scene and character.

Rambler . . . Rasselas. *The Rambler* was a series of Johnsonian essays, on the plan of the moralizing papers in *The Spectator* of Addison. *Rasselas* is a moralizing romance supposed to be laid in Abyssinia.

P. 33. **John Boston.** This should be Thomas Boston, a Scottish minister of some note (1676–1832).

Jacobite blood. The Jacobites were the adherents of the Stuart Pretender to the British throne.

Lord Kames . . . Hume, Robertson, Smith. Lord Kames's *Elements of Criticism* was much praised in its day, but Goldsmith said of it, 'It is easier to write that kind of book than to read it. David Hume, William Robertson, and Adam Smith were Scotchmen — a philosopher, an historian, and a political economist — who attained fame in the eighteenth century.

Racine and Voltaire, Batteux and Boileau. The leading poets and critics of the French classical period, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Montesquieu, Mably, Quesnay. French publicists and economists of the same period.

La Flèche. A town in France in which David Hume spent some years, in order to write in peace.

P. 35. '**a tide of Scottish prejudice.**' It was the boyish reading of a history of Sir William Wallace which, Burns says, 'poured a tide,' etc.

A wish (I mind its power), etc. See Burns's *Epistle to the Guidwife of Wauchope House, Appendix*, p. **117.**

P. 36. **he never attains to any clearness regarding himself.** There is no more touching comment upon Burns's limitations than the following complacent passage from his *Autobiography:* 'It was ever my opinion that the mistakes and blunders of which we see thousands guilty, are owing to their ignorance of themselves. To know myself has been all along my study.'

P. 38. Comparison has been made between the **hard-handed peasant** here described, and Carlyle's own father. The senior Burns in this description lacks the characteristic of stern restraint which made it possible for Carlyle to say of his father, 'We had all to complain that we durst not freely love him.' Burns, however, ascribes to his father a trait which was equally distant from the character of James Carlyle: that of 'headlong ungovernable irascibility.'

the crossing of a brook. Alluding to Caesar's crossing the little Rubicon that divided Italy from Gaul.

P. 39. **a priest-like father.** See *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, *Appendix*, p. 124.

in glory and in joy, etc. Quoted incorrectly from Wordsworth's tribute to Burns in *The Leech-Gatherer:*

> 'Of him who walked in glory and in joy,
> Following his plow, along the mountain side.'

The gayest, brightest, most fantastic, fascinating being. Murdoch, the schoolmaster, whose authority Carlyle cites later, says, 'Robert's countenance was generally grave, and expressive of a serious, contemplative, and thoughtful mind.' 'At those years, said Burns, of the same period, 'I was by no means a favorite with anybody.' For further particulars, which put Carlyle's impression of the poet's boyhood somewhat in doubt, see Lockhart's *Life of Burns*, Chap. I.

P. 40. **sharp adamant of Fate.** Adamant, chaos, welter, hulls. hearsays, furtherances, formulas, are among the words which you will find Carlyle using to the point of mannerism.

P. 41. '**passions raging like demons.**' 'My passions, once lighted up, raged like so many devils, till they found vent in rhyme; and then the conning over my verses like a spell soothed all to quiet,' are Burns's words.

his character for sobriety. His reputation for respectable conduct, as for sobriety in the narrower sense. Burns's brother Gilbert testified that, despite his praise of 'Scotch drink' and various local rumors, 'I do not recollect . . . till his growing celebrity occasioned his being often in company, to have seen him intoxicated; nor was he at all given to drinking.'

P. 42. '**hungry Ruin has him in the wind.**'

'I took a steerage passage in the first ship that was to sail from the Clyde; for "Hungry Ruin had me in the wind." I had been for some days skulking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends; my chest was on the way to Greenock; I had composed the last song I ever should measure in Caledonia, "The gloomy night is gathering fast," when a letter from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition.' — Burns's *Autobiography.*

The original reading of the last verse Carlyle quotes is, 'Farewell, the bonnie banks of Ayr.' Which is the better version?

A mad Rienzi. The Roman adventurer of the fourteenth century who made himself master of Rome, but came to a tragic end.

P. 43. **societies which they would have scorned.** 'It was little in Burns's character,' says Lockhart, 'to submit to nice and scrupulous rules, when he knew that by crossing the street he could find society who would applaud him the more, the more heroically all such rules were disregarded.'

Virgilium vidi tantum. Freely, "I have had at least a glimpse of Virgil." Ovid, *Tristia*, IV. 10, 51.

Langhorne. John Langhorne (1735–1779), minor poet, and translator of *Plutarch's Lives*. The second verse of the quotation reads, in the original, 'Perhaps that parent mourned her soldier slain.' Is Scott's variation an improvement?

P. 46. Of **the good old Blacklock**, Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale, 'This morning I saw at breakfast Dr. Blacklock the blind poet, who does not remember to have seen light, and is read to by a poor scholar, in Latin, French, and Greek. He was originally a poor scholar himself. I looked upon him with reverence.'

modica of pudding and praise. Contrast this with the passage quoted (p. 43) to the effect that Burns did not 'rank with those professional ministers of excitement,' etc. Lockhart elsewhere gives an incident which illustrates the poet's independence: 'A certain stately peeress sent to invite him, without, as he fancied, having sufficiently cultivated his acquaintance beforehand. "Mr. Burns," answered the bard, "will do himself the honor of waiting on the —— of ——, provided her ladyship will invite also the Learned Pig." Such an animal was then exhibiting in the Grass-market.'

P. 47. Be sure you understand **exciseman** and **gauger** as they are applied to Burns. — There is no doubt that on the whole he was faithful in the discharge of his duties, but here is an anecdote told by a Professor Gillespie, which indicates that occasionally the poet in Burns got the better of the exciseman. 'An information had been lodged against a poor widow of the name of Kate Watson, who had ventured to serve a few of her old country friends with a draught of unlicensed ale, and a lacing of whiskey. I saw him [Burns] enter her door, and anticipated nothing short of an immediate seizure. A nod, accompanied by a significant movement of the forefinger, brought Kate to the doorway, and I was near enough to hear the following words: "Kate, are ye mad? D'ye no ken that the supervisor and I will be in upon you in the course of forty minutes? Guid bye t'ye at present." '

P. 48. **To his last day, he owed no man anything.** Carlyle is mistaken here. Not long before his death, Burns wrote the following desperate lines to his cousin; on the same day sending a similar appeal, to a friend, Mr. Thomson: 'A rascal of a haberdasher, to whom I owe a considerable bill, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process against me, and will infallibly put my emaciated body into jail. Will you be so good as to accommodate me, and that by return of post, with ten pounds? — Save me from the horrors of a jail!'

P. 49. **Maecenases.** The name of the poet Horace's protector is used by Carlyle, as well as by Macaulay, interchangeably with 'patron.' Until the reading public grew large enough — well into the eighteenth century — writers looked as a matter of course to 'patrons,' rich and usually titled men, to support them.

These men . . . the means of his ruin. Carlyle sums this up eloquently at the close of his lecture on *The Hero as Man of Letters:*

'. . . Alas, as I have observed elsewhere, these Lion-hunters were the ruin and death of Burns. It was they that rendered it impossible for him to live. They gathered round him in his Farm; hindered his industry; no place was remote enough from them. He could not get his Lionism forgotten, honestly as he was disposed to do so. He falls into discontents, into miseries, faults; the world getting ever more desolate for him; health, character, peace of mind all gone; — solitary enough now. It is tragical to think of! These men came but to *see* him; it was out of no sympathy with him, nor no hatred to him. They came to get a little amusement: they got their amusement; — and the Hero's life went for it!

'Richter says, in the Island of Sumatra there is a kind of "Light-chafers," large Fire-flies, which people stick upon spits, and illuminate the ways with at night. Persons of condition can thus travel with a pleasant radiance, which they much admire. Great honor to the Fire-flies! But —! . . .'

P. 50. **a Jacobin.** An extremely radical or, as we now say, 'red' society in France, at the time of the Revolution.

These accusations . . . were false enough. The fact that on one occasion Burns sent to the French Convention a number of small cannon which in his official capacity he had captured from a smuggling vessel, made such charges from headquarters not unnatural. Burns's sympathy with the French, however, seems to have been far less deep-seated than his feeling for America. 'According to the tradition of the neighborhood, Burns gave great

offence by demurring, in a large mixed company, to the toast, "The health of William Pitt"; and left the room in indignation because the society rejected what he wished to substitute, namely, "The health of a greater and better man, George Washington."' See Lockhart's *Life*, Chap. VII. Read also Burns's unfinished ballad on *The American War*.

P. 51. '**entertained him very agreeably** — with a bowl of his usual potation,' says Lockhart.

P. 52. The '**high-mindedness of refusing them**' was rated at its full worth by Burns himself, in a bombastic letter to his editor, which offers a fair example of his English prose at its worst: 'I swear by that honor which crowns the upright statue of Robert Burns's integrity, on the least motion of it [payment] I will indignantly spurn the by-past transaction [the unfortunate editor had sent him a draft for £ 5], and from that moment commence to be an entire stranger to you. Burns's character for generosity of sentiment and independence of mind will, I trust, long outlive any of his wants which the cold, unfeeling ore can supply; at least I will take care that such a character he shall deserve.'

P. 53. **So the milder third gate was opened.** Do the facts of Burns's death entirely justify the pathos of this passage?

P. 54. **that sentiment of Pride, which we inculcate**, etc. See note on p. 9.

P. 55. **poor promotion he desired in his calling.** Burns tried to get promotion from Supervisor to Excise Collector.

Butler. See note on p. 1.

Cervantes (1547–1616). Author of *Don Quixote*.

thorns . . . fence . . . haws. Alluding to the hawthorn hedges of England.

Roger Bacon (1214–1294). English philosopher and scientist.

Galileo (1564–1642). Italian inventor of the telescope, imprisoned for teaching that the earth revolves around the sun.

Tasso. Torquato Tasso (1544–1595), author of the Italian epic *Jerusalem Delivered*.

Camoens. Luiz de Camoens (1524–1580). Author of the Portuguese epic *The Lusiad*.

P. 58. **Restaurateur.** Restaurant-keeper. Carlyle wrote in his *Note Book* (Dec. 3, 1826): 'It is a damnable heresy in criticism to maintain either expressly or implicitly that the ultimate object of poetry is sensation. That of cookery is such, but not that of poetry. Sir Walter Scott is the great intellectual *restaurateur* of Europe.

What are his novels — any one of them? Are we wiser, better, holier, stronger? No. We have been amused.'

Locke. John Locke (1632–1704).

P. 59. **The Araucana.** Poem by a sixteenth century Spaniard, Alonso de Ercilla.

P. 60. **like that of Rabelais.** François Rabelais (1495–1553). The great satirical humorist of France, whose last words are said to have been, ' I am going to the Great Perhaps.'

P. 61. **Jean Paul.** Literary name of Johann Paul Friedrich Richter (1763–1825); German mystic and humorist, and one of Carlyle's acknowledged masters.

P. 64. **Swift.** Jonathan Swift (1667–1745). Greatest of English satirists and author of *Gulliver's Travels.*

Rousseau. Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778). French social philosopher and autobiographer. Carlyle celebrates him in his '*Hero as Man of Letters.*'

Ramsgate. A small seaport in Kent, England.

Isle of Dogs. A peninsula near the mouth of the Thames.

P. 65. **Valclusa Fountain.** The fountain of the village of Vaucluse, near Avignon, which was celebrated by the poet Petrarch under the Latin form of the name here given.

SELECTIONS FROM BURNS

APPENDIX

Selections from Burns's Poems.

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY,

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH, APRIL, 1786.

Wee, modest, crimson-tippèd flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem:
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonie gem.

Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet
Wi' spreckl'd breast,
When upward-springing, blythe, to greet
The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent-earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods an' wa's maun shield:
But thou, beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
And guileless trust;
Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple Bard,
On Life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering Worth is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
By human pride or cunning driv'n
To mis'ry's brink;
Till, wrench'd of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,
He, ruin'd, sink!

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine — no distant date;
Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight
Shall be thy doom!

TO A MOUSE,

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH, NOVEMBER, 1785.

Wee, sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie,
Oh, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty
Wi' bickerin brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee
Wi' murd'rin pattle!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve:
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen icker in a thrave
'S a sma' request;
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
An' never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin
Baith snell an' keen!
Thou saw the fields laid bare and waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coulter past
Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft agley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain
For promis'd joy.

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But och! I backward cast my ee
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

ON SEEING A WOUNDED HARE LIMP BY ME WHICH A FELLOW HAD JUST SHOT AT.

INHUMAN man! Curse on thy barb'rous art,
And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye;
May never pity soothe thee with a sigh,
Nor never pleasure glad thy cruel heart!

Go live, poor wanderer of the wood and field,
The bitter little that of life remains!
No more the thickening brakes and verdant plains
To thee shall home, or food, or pastime yield.

Seek, mangled wretch, some place of wonted rest,
No more of rest, but now thy dying bed!
The sheltering rushes whistling o'er thy head,
The cold earth with thy bloody bosom prest.

Oft as by winding Nith I, musing, wait
The sober eve, or hail the cheerful dawn,
I'll miss thee sporting o'er the dewy lawn,
And curse the ruffian's aim, and mourn thy hapless fate.

A WINTER NIGHT.

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm!
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these?

SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN biting Boreas, fell and dour,
Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r;
When Phœbus gies a short-lived glow'r
Far south the lift,

Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r
Or whirling drift:

Ae night the storm the steeples rock'd,
Poor Labour sweet in sleep was lock'd,
While burns, wi' snawy wreaths up-chok'd,
Wild-eddying swirl,
Or, thro' the mining outlet bock'd,
Down headlong hurl:

Listening the doors and winnocks rattle,
I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O' winter war,
An' through the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle
Beneath a scaur.

Ilk happin bird — wee, helpless thing! —
That in the merry months o' spring
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Whare wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing
An' close thy ee?

Ev'n you on murd'ring errands toil'd,
Lone from your savage homes exil'd, —
The blood-stain'd roost an' sheep-cote spoil'd
My heart forgets,
While pityless the tempest wild
Sore on you beats!

Now Phœbe, in her midnight reign,
Dark mufflʼd, viewʼd the dreary plain;
Still crowding thoughts, a pensive train,
Rose in my soul,
When on my ear this plaintive strain,
Slow-solemn, stole: —

"Blow, blow ye winds with heavier gust!
And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost!
Descend, ye chilly, smothʼring snows!
Not all your rage, as now united, shows
More hard unkindness, unrelenting,
Vengeful malice, unrepenting,
Than heaven-illuminʼd Man on brother man bestows!

"See stern Oppressionʼs iron grip,
Or mad Ambitionʼs gory hand,
Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,
Woe, Want, and Murder oʼer a land!
Evʼn in the peaceful rural vale,
Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale:
How pamperʼd Luxury, Flattʼry by her side,
The parasite empoisoning her ear,
With all the servile wretches in the rear,
Looks oʼer proud Property, extended wide;
And eyes the simple, rustic hind,
Whose toil upholds the glittʼring show —
A creature of another kind,
Some coarser substance, unrefinʼd —
Placʼd for her lordly use, thus far, thus vile, below!

"Where, where is Love's fond, tender throe,
With lordly Honourʼs lofty brow,
The powʼrs you proudly own?

Is there, beneath Love's noble name,
Can harbour, dark, the selfish aim,
To bless himself alone?
Mark Maiden-Innocence a prey
To love-pretending snares:
This boasted Honor turns away,
Shunning soft Pity's rising sway,
Regardless of the tears and unavailing pray'rs!
Perhaps this hour, in Misery's squalid nest,
She strains your infant to her joyless breast,
And with a mother's fears shrinks at the rocking blast!

"O ye! who, sunk in beds of down,
Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
Think, for a moment, on his wretched fate,
Whom friends and fortune quite disown!
Ill-satisfy'd keen nature's clam'rous call,
Stretched on his straw, he lays himself to sleep;
While through the ragged roof and chinky wall,
Chill, o'er his slumbers piles the drifty heap!
Think on the dungeon's grim confine,
Where Guilt and poor Misfortune pine!
Guilt, erring man, relenting view!
But shall thy legal rage pursue
The wretch, already crushèd low
By cruel Fortune's undeservèd blow?
Affliction's sons are brothers in distress;
A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss!"

I heard nae mair, for chanticleer
Shook off the pouthery snaw,
And hailed the morning with a cheer —
A cottage-rousing craw.

But deep this truth impress'd my mind:
Through all His works abroad,
The heart benevolent and kind
The most resembles God.

THE AULD FARMER'S NEW-YEAR MORNING SALUTATION TO HIS AULD MARE, MAGGIE,

ON GIVING HER THE ACCUSTOMED RIPP OF CORN TO HANSEL IN THE NEW YEAR.

A guid New-Year I wish thee, Maggie!
Hae, there's a ripp to thy auld baggie:
Tho' thou's howe-backit now, an' knaggie,
I've seen the day
Thou could hae gane like ony staggie
Out-owre the lay.

Tho' now thou's dowie, stiff, an' crazy,
An' thy auld hide as white's a daisie,
I've seen thee dappl't, sleek, an' glaizie,
A bonie gray:
He should been tight that daur't to raize thee,
Ance in a day.

Thou ance was i' the foremost rank,
A filly buirdly, steeve, an' swank;
An' set weel down a shapely shank
As e'er tread yird;
An' could hae flown out-owre a stank
Like ony bird.

It's now some nine-and-twenty year
Sin' thou was my guid-father's meere;

He gied me thee, o' tocher clear,
An' fifty mark;
Tho' it was sma', 't was weel-won gear,
An' thou was stark.

When first I gaed to woo my Jenny,
Ye then was trottin wi' your minnie:
Tho' ye was trickie, slee and funny,
Ye ne'er was donsie;
But hamely, tawie, quiet an' cannie,
An' unco sonsie.

That day ye pranc'd wi' mickle pride,
When ye bure hame my bonie bride:
An' sweet an' gracefu' she did ride,
Wi' maiden air!
Kyle-Stewart I could braggèd wide
For sic a pair.

Tho' now ye dow but hoyte an' hoble
An' wintle like a saumont-coble,
That day ye was a jinker noble
For heels an' win'!
An' ran them till they a' did wauble
Far, far behin'!

When thou an' I were young an' skiegh,
An' stable meals at fairs were driegh,
How thou wad prance an' snore an' skriegh,
An' tak' the road!
Toun's bodies ran, an' stood abiegh,
An' ca't thee mad.

When thou was corn't an' I was mellow,
We took the road ay like a swallow:
At brooses thou had ne'er a fellow
For pith an' speed;
But ev'ry tail thou pay't them hollow,
Whare'er thou gaed.

The sma', droop-rumpl't, hunter cattle
Might aiblins waur't thee for a brattle;
But sax Scotch mile thou try't their mettle
An' gart them whaizle:
Nae whip nor spur, but just a wattle
O' saugh or hazel.

Thou was a noble fittie-lan'
As e'er in tug or tow was drawn!
Aft thee an' I, in aught hours' gaun
On guid March-weather,
Hae turn'd sax rood beside our han'
For days thegither.

Thou never braing't, an' fetch't, an' flisket,
But thy auld tail thou wad hae whisket
An' spread abreed thy weel-fill'd brisket,
Wi' pith an' pow'r,
Till spritty knowes wad rair't and risket
An' slypet owre.

When frosts lay lang an' snaws were deep
An' threaten'd labour back to keep,
I gied thy cog a wee-bit heap
Aboon the timmer:
I ken'd my Maggie wad na sleep
For that, or simmer.

In cart or car thou never reestit;
The steyest brae thou wad hae faced it;
Thou never lap an' sten't an' breastit,
Then stood to blaw;
But just thy step a wee thing hastit,
Thou snoov't awa.

My pleugh is now thy bairn-time a',
Four gallant brutes as e'er did draw;
Forbye sax mae I've sell't awa,
That thou hast nurst:
They drew me thretteen pund an' twa,
The vera warst.

Mony a sair daurg we twa hae wrought,
An' wi' the weary warl' fought!
An' mony an anxious day I thought
We wad be beat!
Yet here to crazy age we're brought
Wi' something yet.

And think na, my auld trusty servan',
That now, perhaps, thou's less deservin,
And thy auld days may end in stervin;
For my last fou,
A heapit stimpart, I'll reserve ane,
Laid by for you.

We've worn to crazy years thegither;
We'll toyte about wi' ane anither;
Wi' tentie care I'll flit thy tether
To some hain'd rig,
Whare ye may noble rax your leather,
Wi' sma' fatigue.

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL.

O Prince! O Chief of many thronèd pow'rs!
That led th' embattl'd seraphim to war. — MILTON.

O THOU! whatever title suit thee, —
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie —
Wha in yon cavern, grim an' sootie,
Clos'd under hatches,
Spairges about the brunstane cootie
To scaud poor wretches!

Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee,
An' let poor damnèd bodies be;
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
E'en to a deil,
To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me,
An' hear us squeel!

Great is thy pow'r, an' great thy fame;
Far ken'd an' noted is thy name;
An' tho' yon lowin heugh's thy hame,
Thou travels far;
An' faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,
Nor blate nor scaur.

Whyles, rangin like a roarin lion,
For prey a' holes an' corners tryin;
Whyles, on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin,
Tirlin the kirks;
Whyles, in the human bosom pryin,
Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my rev'rend grannie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or whare auld ruin'd castles gray
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way
Wi' eldritch croon.

When twilight did my grannie summon
To say her pray'rs, douce honest woman!
Aft yont the dyke she's heard you bummin,
Wi' eerie drone;
Or, rustlin, thro' the boortrees comin,
Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' sklentin light,
Wi' you mysel I gat a fright
Ayont the lough;
Ye like a rash-buss stood in sight
Wi' waving sough.

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Each bristl'd hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch, stoor "Quaick, quaick,"
Amang the springs,
Awa ye squatter'd like a drake,
On whistlin wings.

Let warlocks grim, an' wither'd hags
Tell how wi' you, on ragweed nags
They skim the muirs an' dizzy crags
Wi' wicked speed;
An' in kirk-yards renew their leagues,
Owre howkit dead.

Thence, countra wives wi' toil an' pain
May plunge an' plunge the kirn in vain;
For O! the yellow treasure's taen
By witchin skill;
An' dawtit, twal-pint hawkie's gaen
As yell's the bill.

Thence, mystic knots mak great abuse,
On young guidmen, fond, keen, an' crouse;
When the best wark-lume i' the house,
By cantrip wit,
Is instant made no worth a louse,
Just at the bit.

When thowes dissolve the snawy hoord,
An' float the jinglin icy-boord,
Then water-kelpies haunt the foord
By your direction,
An' nighted trav'lers are allur'd
To their destruction.

And aft your moss-traversing spunkies
Decoy the wight that late and drunk is:
The bleezin, curst, mischievous monkeys
Delude his eyes,
Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
Ne'er mair to rise.

When Masons' mystic word and grip
In storms an' tempests raise you up,
Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
Or, strange to tell,
The youngest brither ye wad whip
Aff straught to hell!

Lang syne, in Eden's bonie yard,
When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
And all the soul of love they shar'd,
The raptur'd hour,
Sweet on the fragrant flow'ry swaird,
In shady bow'r:

Then you, ye auld sneck-drawin dog!
Ye cam to Paradise incog,
And play'd on man a cursed brogue,
(Black be your fa'!)
And gied the infant warld a shog,
Maist ruin'd a'.

D'ye mind that day when in a bizz,
Wi' reeket duds and reestit gizz,
Ye did present your smoutie phiz
Mang better folk,
An' sklented on the man of Uz
Your spitefu' joke?

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
An' brak him out o' house and hall,
While scabs and blotches did him gall,
Wi' bitter claw;
An' lows'd his ill-tongued, wicked scaul
Was warst ava?

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares an' fechtin fierce,
Sin' that day Michael did you pierce,
Down to this time,
Wad ding a Lallan tongue, or Erse,
In prose or rhyme.

An' now, Auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkin,
A certain Bardie's rantin, drinkin,
Some luckless hour will send him linkin,
To your black Pit;
But faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin,
An' cheat you yet.

But fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben!
O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!
Ye aiblins might — I dinna ken —
Still hae a stake:
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
Ev'n for your sake!

SCOTS WHA HAE.

Tune, Hey, Tutti Taitie.

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victory!

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's power —
Chains and slavery!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's King and Law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand, or Freeman fa',
  Let him follow me!

By Oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
  But they shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow! —
  Let us do, or die!

M'PHERSON'S FAREWELL.

Tune, "M'Pherson's Rant."

FAREWELL, ye dungeons dark and strong,
  The wretch's destinie!
M'Pherson's time will not be long
  On yonder gallows-tree.

CHORUS. — Sae rantinly, sae wantonly,
    Sae dauntinly gaed he;
  He play'd a spring, and danc'd it round,
    Below the gallows-tree.

O what is death but parting breath? —
  On monie a bloody plain
I've dar'd his face, and in this place
  I scorn him yet again!

Untie these bands from off my hands
And bring to me my sword,
And there's no man in all Scotland,
But I'll brave him at a word.

I've liv'd a life of sturt and strife;
I die by treacherie:
It burns my heart I must depart
And not avengèd be.

Now farewell light, thou sunshine bright,
And all beneath the sky!
May coward shame distain his name,
The wretch that dare not die!

POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY.

Lament in rhyme, lament in prose,
Wi' saut tears tricklin doun your nose;
Our Bardie's fate is at a close,
Past a' remead;
The last, sad cape-stane o' his woe's —
Poor Mailie's dead!

It's no the loss o' warl's gear,
That could sae bitter draw the tear,
Or mak our Bardie, dowie, wear
The mournin weed:
He's lost a friend and neebor dear,
In Mailie dead.

Thro' a' the toun she trotted by him;
A lang half-mile she could descry him;
Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him,

She ran wi' speed:
A friend mair faithfu' ne'er cam nigh him,
Than Mailie dead.

I wat she was a sheep o' sense,
An' could behave hersel wi' mense;
I'll say't, she never brak a fence,
Thro' thievish greed.
Our Bardie, lanely, keeps the spence
Sin' Mailie's dead.

Or, if he wanders up the howe,
Her livin image in her yowe
Comes bleatin till him, owre the knowe,
For bits o' bread;
An' down the briny pearls rowe
For Mailie dead.

She was nae get o' moorlan' tips,
Wi' tawted ket, an' hairy hips;
For her forbears were brought in ships,
Frae yont the Tweed:
A bonier fleesh ne'er cross'd the clips
Than Mailie's dead.

Wae worth the man wha first did shape
That vile, wanchancie thing — a rape!
It makes guid fellows girn an' gape,
Wi' chokin dread;
An' Robin's bonnet wave wi' crape,
For Mailie dead.

O a' ye Bards on bonie Doon!
An' wha on Ayr your chanters tune!
Come, join the melancholious croon
O' Robin's reed!
His heart will never get aboon —
His Mailie's dead!

TAM O' SHANTER.

A TALE.

Of Brownyis and of Bogillis full is this Buke. — GAWIN DOUGLAS.

WHEN chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neebors neebors meet,
As market-days are wearing late,
And folk begin to tak the gate;
While we sit bousin at the nappy,
And gettin fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and stiles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky, sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter:
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses
For honest men and bonie lasses.)

O Tam! had'st thou but been sae wise
As taen thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,

A bletherin, blusterin, drunken blellum;
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was na sober;
That ilka melder wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roarin fou on;
That at the Lord's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
She prophesied, that, late or soon,
Thou would be found deep drown'd in Doon,
Or catch't wi' warlocks in the mirk,
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,
To think how monie counsels sweet,
How monie lengthen'd sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale: — Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right,
Fast by an ingle, bleezin finely,
Wi' reamin swats that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter Johnie,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony:
Tam lo'ed him like a vera brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;
And ay the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious
Wi' secret favours, sweet, and precious:
The souter tauld his queerest stories;

THE "TAM O' SHANTER" INN, AYR.

The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himsel amang the nappy:
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure;
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white — then melts for ever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.
Nae man can tether time or tide:
The hour approaches Tam maun ride: —
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 't wad blawn its last;
The rattling show'rs rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellow'd:
That night, a child might understand,
The Deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his gray mear, Meg,
A better never lifted leg,
Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
Despising wind and rain and fire;
Whiles holding fast his guid blue bonnet,
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet,
Whiles glowrin round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares:
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd;
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Whare drucken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.
Before him Doon pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;
The lightnings flash from pole to pole,
Near and more near the thunders roll;
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seemed in a bleeze;
Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing,
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!
What dangers thou can'st make us scorn!
Wi' tippenny we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquebae we'll face the Devil!
The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he car'd na deils a boddle.

But Maggie stood, right sair astonish'd,
Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She ventur'd forward on the light;
And, wow! Tam saw an unco sight!

Warlocks and witches in a dance;
Nae cotillion brent-new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels
Put life and mettle in their heels:
A winnock-bunker in the east,
There sat Auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
A towzie tyke, black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge;
He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl. —
Coffins stood round like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
And by some devilish cantraip sleight
Each in its cauld hand held a light,
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table
A murderer's banes in gibbet airns;
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns;
A thief, new-cutted frae the rape —
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
Five tomahawks, wi' blude red-rusted;
Five scymitars, wi' murder crusted;
A garter, which a babe had strangled;
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft —
The gray hairs yet stack to the heft;
Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu',
Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowr'd, amaz'd and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious:
The piper loud and louder blew,
The dancers quick and quicker flew;
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit.
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit
And coost her duddies to the wark
And linket at it in her sark!

Now Tam, O Tam! had thae been queans,
A' plump and strapping in their teens!
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linen!—
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' gude blue hair,
I wad hae gien them aff my hurdies,
For ae blink o' the bonie burdies!

But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal,
Lowping and flinging on a crummock,
I wonder didna turn thy stomach.

But Tam ken'd what was what fu' brawlie;
There was ae winsome wench and walie,
That night enlisted in the core
(Lang after ken'd on Carrick shore:
For mony a beast to dead she shot,
And perish'd mony a bonie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
And kept the country-side in fear);
Her cutty sark o' Paisley harn,
That while a lassie she had worn,

In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.
Ah! little kent thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots ('twas a' her riches),
Wad ever graced a dance o' witches!

But here my Muse her wing maun cour,
Sic flights are far beyond her pow'r;
To sing how Nannie lap and flang,
(A souple jad she was and strang,)
And how Tam stood like ane bewitch'd,
And thought his very een enrich'd;
Even Satan glowr'd and fidg'd fu' fain,
And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main:
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
And roars out, "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
And in an instant all was dark:
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,
When plundering herds assail their byke;
As open pussie's mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' mony an eldritch skriech and hollo.

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin!
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!

Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane of the brig:
There at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they dare na cross.
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient a tail she had to shake!
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;
But little wist she Maggie's mettle —
Ae spring brought aff her master hale,
But left behind her ain gray tail:
The carlin claught her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man and mother's son, take heed,
Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd,
Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,
Think, ye may buy the joys owre dear:
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mear.

TO MARY IN HEAVEN.

Thou ling'ring star with less'ning ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

That sacred hour can I forget,
  Can I forget the hallowed grove,
Where by the winding Ayr we met
  To live one day of parting love?
Eternity will not efface
  Those records dear of transports past,
Thy image at our last embrace —
  Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

Ayr, gurgling, kiss'd his pebbl'd shore,
  O'erhung with wild woods, thick'ning green;
The fragrant birch and hawthorn hoar
  Twin'd amorous round the raptur'd scene:
The flow'rs sprang wanton to be prest,
  The birds sang love on every spray,
Till too, too soon the glowing West
  Proclaim'd the speed of winged day.

Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,
  And fondly broods with miser-care!
Time but th' impression stronger makes,
  As streams their channels deeper wear.
My Mary, dear departed shade!
  Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
  Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

AULD LANG SYNE.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
  And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
  And auld lang syne?

CHORUS. — For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne!

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,
And surely I'll be mine!
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne!

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pu'd the gowans fine;
But we've wander'd monie a weary fit,
Sin' auld lang syne!

We twa hae paidl't i' the burn,
From morning sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd,
Sin' auld lang syne!

And there's a hand, my trusty fier,
And gie's a hand o' thine;
And we'll tak a right guid-willie waught
For auld lang syne!

OF A' THE AIRTS THE WIND CAN BLAW.

Of a' the airts the wind can blaw
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best:

There's wild woods grow an' rivers row,
An' mony a hill between;
But day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flow'rs,
I see her sweet an' fair:
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air:
There's not a bonie flow'r that springs
By fountain, shaw, or green;
There's not a bonie bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean.

DUNCAN GRAY.

Duncan Gray cam here to woo,
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
On blythe Yule-night when we were fou,
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Maggie coost her head fu hiegh,
Look'd asklent and unco skiegh,
Gart poor Duncan stand abiegh;
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!

Duncan fleech'd, and Duncan pray'd;
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Meg was deaf as Ailsa Craig,
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Duncan sigh'd baith out and in,
Grat his een baith bleer't and blin',
Spak o' lowpin owre a linn;
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!

Time and chance are but a tide,
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Slighted love is sair to bide,
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
"Shall I, like a fool," quoth he,
"For a haughty hizzie die?
She may gae to — France for me!"
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!

How it comes let doctors tell,
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Meg grew sick as he grew hale,
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Something in her bosom wrings,
For relief a sigh she brings;
And O! her een, they spak sic things!
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!

Duncan was a lad o' grace,
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Maggie's was a piteous case,
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Duncan could na be her death,
Swelling pity smoor'd his wrath;
Now they're crouse and cantie baith;
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!

ANSWER TO VERSES ADDRESSED TO THE POET

BY THE GUIDWIFE OF WAUCHOPE-HOUSE.

GUIDWIFE,

I mind it weel, in early date,
When I was beardless, young, and blate,
An' first could thresh the barn,
Or haud a yokin at the pleugh,
An' tho' forfoughten sair eneugh,
Yet unco proud to learn:
When first amang the yellow corn
A man I reckon'd was,
And wi' the lave ilk merry morn
Could rank my rig and lass
Still shearing, and clearing
The tither stookèd raw,
Wi' claivers an' haivers
Wearing the day awa:

Ev'n then a wish (I mind its power),
A wish that to my latest hour
Shall strongly heave my breast;
That I for poor auld Scotland's sake
Some usefu' plan or book could make,
Or sing a sang at least.
The rough burr-thistle, spreading wide
Amang the bearded bear,
I turn'd the weeder-clips aside
An' spar'd the symbol dear:
No nation, no station
My envy e'er could raise;

A Scot still, but blot still,
I knew nae higher praise.

But still the elements o' sang
In formless jumble, right an' wrang,
Wild floated in my brain;
Till on that hairst I said before,
My partner in the merry core,
She rous'd the forming strain:
I see her yet, the sonsie quean,
That lighted up my jingle,
Her witching smile, her pauky een,
That gart my heart-strings tingle;
I firèd, inspirèd,
At ev'ry kindling keek,
But bashing, and dashing,
I fearèd aye to speak.

Hale to the sex! ilk guid chiel says,
Wi' merry dance on winter days,
An' we to share in common:
The gust o' joy, the balm of woe,
The saul o' life, the heav'n below,
Is rapture-giving Woman.
Ye surly sumphs, who hate the name,
Be mindfu' o' your mither:
She, honest woman, may think shame
That ye're connected with her.
Ye're wae men, ye're nae men,
That slight the lovely dears;
To shame ye, disclaim ye,
Ilk honest birkie swears.

For you, no bred to barn and byre,
Wha sweetly tune the Scottish lyre,
Thanks to you for your line:
The marled plaid ye kindly spare,
By me should gratefully be ware;
'Twad please me to the nine.
I'd be more vauntie o' my hap,
Douce hingin owre my curple,
Than ony ermine ever lap,
Or proud imperial purple.
Farewell then, lang hale then,
An' plenty be your fa':
May losses and crosses
Ne'er at your hallan ca'!

SONG, — MARY MORISON.

O Mary, at thy window be,
It is the wish'd, the trysted hour!
Those smiles and glances let me see,
That makes the miser's treasure poor:
How blythely wad I bide the stoure,
A weary slave frae sun to sun,
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison.

Yestreen when to the trembling string
The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard nor saw:
Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sigh'd, and said amang them a',
"Ye are na Mary Morison!"

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace
  Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
  Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie
  At least be pity to me shown:
A thought ungentle canna be
  The thought o' Mary Morison.

JOHN ANDERSON MY JO.

John Anderson my jo, John,
  When we were first acquent,
Your locks were like the raven,
  Your bonie brow was brent;
But now your brow is beld, John,
  Your locks are like the snaw;
But blessings on your frosty pow,
  John Anderson my jo.

John Anderson my jo, John,
  We clamb the hill thegither;
And monie a cantie day, John,
  We've had wi' ane anither:
Now we maun totter down, John,
  And hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
  John Anderson my jo.

THE BANKS O' DOON.

TUNE — "*The Caledonian Hunt's Delight.*"

YE banks and braes o' bonie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary fu' o' care!
Thou'lt break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wantons thro' the flowering thorn:
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed — never to return.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon,
To see the rose and woodbine twine;
And ilka bird sang o' its Luve,
And fondly sae did I o' mine;
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree!
And my fause Luver staw my rose, —
But ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

FLOW GENTLY, SWEET AFTON.

FLOW gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes!
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream, —
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream!

Thou stock-dove whose echo resounds thro' the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den,
Thou green-crested lapwing, thy screaming forbear, —
I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighbouring hills,
Far mark'd with the courses of clear winding rills;
There daily I wander as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow;
There oft, as mild Evening weeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides;
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As gath'ring sweet flow'rets she stems thy clear wave.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes!
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream!

A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT.

Is there, for honest poverty,
That hings his head, an' a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by —
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Our toils obscure, an' a' that;
The rank is but the guinea's stamp;
The man's the gowd for a' that.

What tho' on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hodden-gray, an' a' that;

Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine —
A man's a man for a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their tinsel show, an' a' that;
The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie, ca'd "a lord,"
Wha struts, an' stares, an' a' that;
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a coof for a' that:
For a' that, an' a' that,
His riband, star, an' a' that,
The man o' independent mind —
He looks and laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, an' a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
Guid faith he mauna fa' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their dignities, an' a' that,
The pith o' sense, an' pride o' worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that,
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree, an' a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
It's coming yet, for a' that,
That man to man, the warld o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that.

O, WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST.

O, WERT thou in the cauld blast,
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee.
Or did misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desert were a paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there.
Or were I monarch o' the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

INSCRIBED TO ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ.

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor. — GRAY.

MY lov'd, my honour'd, much respected friend!
No mercenary bard his homage pays;
With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end:
My dearest meed a friend's esteem and praise.
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;

What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween!

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh,
The short'ning winter day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh,
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose;
The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes, —
This night his weekly moil is at an end, —
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an agèd tree;
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher through
To meet their dad, wi' flichterin noise an' glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin bonilie,
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary kiaugh and care beguile,
An' makes him quite forget his labour an' his toil.

Belyve, the elder bairns come drappin in,
At service out amang the farmers roun';
Some ca the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie errand to a neibor toun:
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman-grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her ee,
Comes hame, perhaps to shew a braw new gown,
Or deposite her sair-won penny fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

With joy unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,
An' each for other's weelfare kindly spiers:

The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet;
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears.
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view;
The mother, wi' her needle an' her sheers,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's an' their mistress's command
The younkers a' are warned to obey;
An' mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
An' ne'er , tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play:
"An' O! be sure to fear the Lord alway,
An' mind your duty, duly, morn an' night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright!"

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door.
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's ee, and flush her cheek;
Wi' heart-struck, anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleas'd the mother hears it's nae wild worthless rake.

Wi' kindly welcome Jenny brings him ben,
A strappin youth; he takes the mother's eye;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill taen;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,

But, blate and laithfu', scarce can weel behave;
The mother wi' a woman's wiles can spy
What maks the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave,
Weel-pleas'd to think her bairn's respected like the lave.

O happy love! where love like this is found!
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I've pacèd much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare —
"If Heav'n a draught of heav'nly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning gale."

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart,
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can with studied, sly, ensnaring art
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling smooth!
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child,
Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild?

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The halesome parritch, chief of Scotia's food;
The sowpe their only hawkie does afford,
That yont the hallan snugly chows her cud.
The dame brings forth, in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck fell,
An' aft he's prest, an' aft he ca's it guid;
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 'twas a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They round the ingle form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er with patriarchal grace
The big ha'-bible, ance his father's pride;
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care;
And, "Let us worship GOD," he says with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim:
Perhaps *Dundee's* wild-warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive *Martyrs*, worthy of the name,
Or noble *Elgin* beets the heaven-ward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays.
Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickl'd ear no heart-felt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page, —
How Abram was the friend of GOD on high;
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme, —
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How HE, who bore in Heav'n the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay His head:

How His first followers and servants sped;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
How he, who lone in Patmos banishèd,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounc'd by Heav'n's command.

Then kneeling down to Heav'n's eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
That thus they all shall meet in future days:
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear,
While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride
In all the pomp of method and of art,
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's ev'ry grace except the heart!
The Pow'r, incens'd, the pageant will desert;
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But haply in some cottage far apart
May hear, well pleased, the language of the soul,
And in His book of life the inmates poor enrol.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest;
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heav'n the warm request,
That He, who stills the raven's clam'rous nest
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,

For them and for their little ones provide;
But chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
"An honest man's the noblest work of God":
And certes, in fair Virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind:
What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd!

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heav'n is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And, oh! may Heav'n their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd isle.

O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide
That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted heart,
Who dar'd to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part, —
(The patriot's God peculiarly thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never Scotia's realm desert,
But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

GLOSSARY.

a', all.
abiegh, aloof.
aboon, above.
ae, one.
aff, off.
aft, often.
agley, amiss.
ahint, behind.
aiblins, perhaps.
ain, own.
airn, iron.
airt, direction.
alane, alone.
amaist, almost.
amang, among.
ance, once.
ane, one.
asklent, aslant.
auld, old.
ava, of all, at all.
awa, away, gone.
ayont, beyond.

baggie, stomach.
baillie, **bailie**, magistrate.
bairn, child.
bairn-time, offspring.
baith, both.
bane, bone.
bashing, abashing.
bauld, bold.
bear, barley.
beet, kindle.
belyve, presently.
bicker, a short run.
bield, shelter.
big, *v.*, build.
bill, bull.
billie, fellow, comrade.
bing, heap.
birk, birch.
birkie, fine fellow.
bizz, flurry.
blate, shy, modest.
blaw, blow.
blellum, babbler.
blethers, nonsense.
blink, glance, glimpse.
bluid, blood.
bock, pour forth.
boddle, farthing.
bogle, bogie, goblin.
bonnie, **bonie**, winsome.
boortree, elder-tree.
bore, crevice.
bouse, to drink hard, to "booze."
brae, slope, small hill.
braingt, plunged.
brak, broke.
brattle, scamper; clatter.
braw, fine, handsome.
breastit, sprang forward.
breeks, breeches.
brent-new, brand-new.
brig, bridge.
brogue, trick.
broose, race.
buirdly, stalwart.
bunker, bench.
burdie, maiden, lass.
bure, *v.*, bore.
burn, brook.

buss, bush.
but, outside.

cantie, cheerful.
capestane, capstone.
card, chart.
carlin, old woman.
chanter, bagpipe.
claes, clothes.
cog, bowl.
coof, **cuif**, fool.
cranreuch, hoarfrost.
craw, crow.
crazy, infirm.
creeshie, greasy.
crummock, hooked staff.
curple, crupper.
cutty, short.

daimen icker, occasional ear (of grain).
daurg, **darg**, day's work.
daut, fondle.
dee, die.
deevil, **de'il**, devil.
den, cavern.
dike, **dyke**, stone or turf fence.
ding, knock.
dirl, vibrate, ring.
donsie, wicked.
douce, sedate, prudent.
dour, stubborn; stern.
dowie, low-spirited.
dree, endure, suffer.
driegh, dull.
drouthy, thirsty.
drucken, drunken.
duds, **duddies**, ragged clothes.

ee, eye; *pl.*, **een**.
eldritch, unearthly.
eneuch, enough.
Erse, Gaelic.
ettle, aim.
eydent, diligent.

fae, *n.*, destiny; *v.*, befall.
fand, found.
fecht, fight.
fidgin-fain, fidgeting with pleasure.
fient, fiend.
fittie-lan, plough-horse (fit-the-land).
flee, fly.
flannen, flannel.
fleech, coax, flatter.
fleesh, fleece.
flichter, flutter.
fliskit, capered.
flit, to shift.
foggage, rank grass.
forbye, besides.
forfoughten, tired out.
fou, *adj.*, full, drunk; *n.*, a full measure.
frae, from.
fyke, **fike**, fuss.

gae, **gang**, go.
gar, compel.
gate, road, way, manner.
gaun, going.
gear, goods, wealth.
get, *n.*, offspring.
ghaist, ghost.
gie, give.
gif, if.
gin, if (hard g).
girn, grin with rage.
gizz, face.
glaizie, glossy.
glint, shine.
gowan, daisy.
gowd, gold.
grat, wept.
gree, prize.
greet, weep.
gude, **guid**, good.
gude-man, householder.
gude-willie, good-willed, hearty.
gumlie, muddy.

ha', hall.
hae, have.
haffets, temples (forehead).
hafflins, half-way, partly.
hain, spare, save.
hain'd rig, hedgerow.
hairst, harvest.
haivers, **havers**, nonsense.
halesome, wholesome.
hallan, partition wall.
haly, holy.
hame, home.
hap, cover, wrap.
harn, coarse linen.
haud, hold.
hawkie, cow.
heft, **haft**, handle.
heugh, crag, steep bank.
hing, hang.
histie, dry.
hizzie, hussy.
hodden-gray, coarse undyed wool.
houlet, owlet.
howe-backet, hollow-backed.
howk, dig.
hurdies, hunkers, hips.

icker, ear of corn.
icy-boord, ice-cake.
ilk, **ilka**, each, every.
ingle, chimney-corner.
ither, other.

jauk, trifle.
jaup, splash.
jinker, speeder.

kebbuck, cheese.
kelpie, sprite.
ken, know.
ket, fleece.
kiaugh, care, anxiety.
kirk, church.
kirn, churn.
knaggie, bony.
knowe, knoll.
kye, *pl. of* cow.

lag, slow.
Lallan, Lowland.
lane, lone.
langsyne, long ago.
lap, leapt.
lave, rest, remainder.
lay, **ley**, lea.
lift, *n.*, sky.
lin, **linn**, waterfall.
link, *v.*, to skip.
lint, flax.
loon, rogue.
lowe, flame.
lowp, leap.
lowse, loosen.
lough, **loch**, lake.
luve, love.
luver, lover.
lyart, gray.

mae, more.
mair, more.
mak, make.
marled, mottled.
maun, must.
mauna, must not.
meere, **mear**, mare.
meikle, **mickle**, **muckle**, much; large.
melder, quantity, measure.
mense, tact, good manners.
minnie, mother.

na, not.
nae, *adj.*, no, not any.
naig, nag.
nappy, ale.
neebor, neighbor.
nighted, benighted.

ony, any.
ourie, shivering, drooping.

outowre, out over.
owre, over.

parritch, porridge.
pattle, ploughshare.
pawky, paukie, shrewd.
penny-fee, small earnings.
pleugh, plough.
pouthery, powdery.
pund, pounds.

rair, roar.
raize, stir, excite.
rape, rope.
rash-buss, clump of rushes.
raw, row (*e.g.*, of corn).
rax, reach, stretch.
ream, foam.
red-wat-shod, ankle-deep in blood.
reestit, singed.
remead, remedy.
riband, ribbon.
rig, ridge, row.
rigwoodie, wrinkled, wizened.
ripp, handful of corn.
riskit, crackled.
row, rowe, to roll, to wrap.

sae, so.
sair, sore.
sark, shift.
saugh, willow.
saul, soul.
saumont-coble, salmon-skiff.
saut, salt.
sax, six.
scaul, scold.
scaur, scar, *adj.*, timid; *n.*, cliff.
shaw, a wood.
shog, shock.
sic, such.
silly, simple.
simmer, summer.
skelp, *n.*, slap; *v.*, hasten.
skiegh, shy.
sklent, slant.
skriegh, screech.
slap, gap.
slee, sly.
sleekit, sleek.
slype, slip.
smoor, smother.
smoutie, dingy, smutty.
snaw, snow.
sneck-drawin, latch-lifting, sneaking.
snell, keen, bitter.
snoove, to jog steadily.
sonsie, pleasant, jolly.
sough, sugh, sigh.
souter, cobbler.
sowp, sup, draught.
spairge, splash.
spean, to wean.
spence, inner room.
spier, ask.
sprattle, sprawl.
spring, *n.*, dance.
spritty, fully of roots.
spunkie, will-o'-wisp.
stacher, stagger.
stank, stagnant pool.
stark, strong.
staw, stole.
steeve, stiff, staunch.
sten, a leap.
stey, steep.
stimpart, measure.
stookit, in stooks, or shocks.
stour, harsh.
stoure, conflict, tumult.
stowp, stoup, drinking vessel.
straught, straight.
sturt, trouble.
sumph, blockhead, dolt.
swank, limber, supple.
swats, ale.
syne, since, ago.

tawie, tame, tractable.
tawtet, matted.

tentie, careful.
thir, these.
thole, suffer, endure.
thowe, thaw.
thrave, a double stock of grain.
tight, well-built.
timmer, timber.
tint, lost.
tip, ram.
tippenny, twopenny ale.
tirl, to strip, to unroof.
tither, the other.
tocher, dowry.
toun, town.
tow, rope.
towmond, twelvemonth.
towsie, shaggy.
toyte, totter.
twa, two.
tyke, dog, cur.

unco, *adj.*, uncouth, strange; *adv.*, uncommonly.
uncos, *n.*, wonders, news.
usquebae, whiskey.

vauntie, vain, proud.
vera, *adj.*, very; *adv.*, true.

wae, *n.*, woe; *adj.*, woeful.
wale, choice.
walie, robust.
wanchancie, unlucky.
wark-lume, work-loom.
warl, warld, world.
warlock, wizard.
wauble, to reel.
waught, draught.
weeder-clips, weeding-shears.
whaizle, wheeze.
whyles, whiles, sometimes.
winnock, window.
wintle, stagger.

yard, garden.
yell, dry, giving no milk.
yestreen, yester-even.
yird, earth.
yond, beyond.

History of French Rev. by Carlyle. 1789.